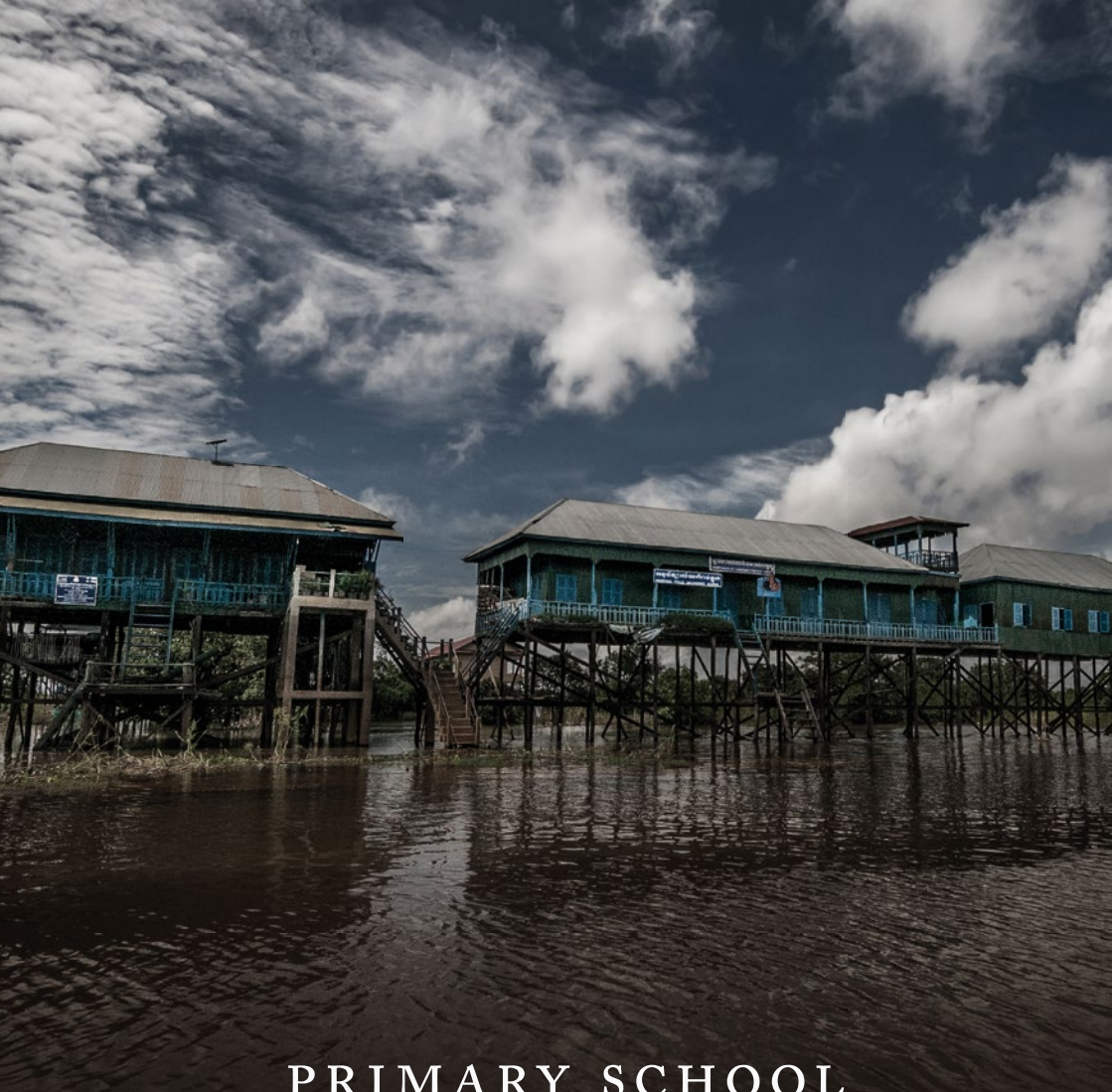

# PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN CAMBODIA

## *Context-Bound Teaching and Leading*

**Thida Kheang, Tom O'Donoghue and Simon Clarke**

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# Contents


# 1

# Introduction

## Introduction

*Over the last fifteen* years it has been increasingly recognised that the quality of school leadership can have a significant influence on school effectiveness and student learning achievement (Bush, 2007, 2012; Jacobson & Ylimaki, 2011; Leithwood & Massey, 2010). On this, Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2008) have argued that school leadership is second to only classroom teaching as an influence on student learning. Commitment to this position has been one influence leading to a growing body of research on educational leadership across the world, especially in well-developed and relatively stable societies (Bush, 2007, 2012; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). This, in turn, has resulted in the development of various models of school leadership, including those related to transformational leadership (Bass, 1985, 1999; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, 1992; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1998, 1999; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010; Leithwood & Sun, 2012), distributed leadership (Hallinger, 2010; Harris, 2004; Heck & Hallinger, 2009), instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003, 2010; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Lee, Hallinger, & Walker, 2012), transactional leadership (Bass, 1985, 1999; Miller & Miller, 2001), and


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managerial leadership (Bush, 2007; Leithwood et al., 1998; Myers & Murphy, 1995). At the same time, relatively few studies have focused on extraordinarily challenging circumstances (Bush, 2008; Harris, 2002) including post-conflict societies, and, in particular, at the individual school level (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013). As a result, there are very few empirical studies that can be drawn upon to help one understand the context and nature of school leadership in post-conflict settings around the world (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013).

A basic assumption underpinning this book is that the approach taken to leadership within in any context can be informed by the nature of that context. To put it another way, leadership needs to be understood through considering how individual differences and actions are influenced by the context within which leaders operate (Gronn & Ribbins, 1996; Vroom & Jago, 2007). This is to say that leadership can be context-bound and needs to be understood from the 'inside out' (Clarke & Wildy, 2004), and that context can be seen as being "the vehicle through which the agency of particular leaders may be empirically understood" (Gronn & Ribbins, 1996, p. 454). Thus, leadership practice, in this view, can be seen to be the result of individual interactions and negotiations in specific contexts. On this, O'Donoghue and Clarke (2010) also argue that having an understanding of leadership in complex and diverse contexts can be of assistance in helping leaders to respond effectively to the problems and challenges encountered by them in their schools.

Consideration of the assumptions outlined above prompted the present authors to focus on investigating the relationship between context and leadership in post-conflict Cambodia. This post-colonial and low-income country was rocked by civil war and genocide between the 1960s and the 1990s. Accordingly, it is not surprising that it is faced with a number of challenges as it engages in the process of national rehabilitation and reconstruction, especially in relation to the education system, which was severely damaged. The specific focus of the investigation was to generate understandings about leadership at the primary school level in post-conflict Cambodia, with a particular emphasis on the historical background to primary school leadership, on recent developments in primary school leadership, and on current concerns of primary school leaders.

## Aims of the Book

The first aim of the study upon which this book is based was to generate an understanding of the background to primary school leadership historically in Cambodia from colonial times until 1998. The pursuit of this aim was premised on the assumption that it is not possible to broadly comprehend current school leadership in Cambodia without having a clear knowledge of how it has evolved over time. Also, it was deemed to be important as the past can regularly have an impact on the present in various ways, including through influencing people's actions.

The aim was addressed through a review and analysis of a wide range of published and other relevant documents obtained from the Cambodian National Public Library, from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), from relevant United Nations (UN) and international development agencies, and from various academic institutions. Also, academic papers, conference publications, newspapers and other documents relevant to the historical background to leadership at the primary school level in Cambodia were studied.

The second aim of the study upon which the book is based was to generate an understanding of the developments that have taken place in Cambodia in relation to leadership at the primary school level from the beginning of the latest post-conflict era to the present. These developments were set in train by the current political regime in Cambodia, which has been in power for over three decades. As education reconstruction is one of the main priorities in this post-conflict nation, it was deemed important to gain an understanding of the Cambodian government's recent initiatives and reforms in its efforts to develop education and, in particular, to shape primary school leadership.

Again, the second aim was pursued through an analysis of a wide range of contemporary documents and public records. This document analysis was supplemented by individual interviews. These were undertaken with education officers working at different education levels in Cambodia.

The third aim of the study upon which the book is based was to generate understandings of the issues that are of current concern to primary school leaders in Cambodia and the strategies adopted by them in order to deal with those issues. Education policy and decision-making in the

nation, it was held, could benefit from being informed by an understanding of these issues and strategies. In particular, our position was that such understandings could be of help in designing professional development programmes for education leaders in Cambodia, as well as being instructive for those working in other countries that have been affected by conflict. Also, we held that such understandings could help to inform future research on school leadership in post-conflict environments and result in insights to guide and refine educational leadership practices.

To address the third aim, a series of semi-structured interviews was conducted with primary school principals, deputy principals, and representatives of school support committees (SSC). Purposive selection and maximum variation techniques were adopted in order to select a wide range of participants (Creswell, 2013; Punch, 2009). In total, participants in 15 public primary schools located in five different geographical locations were interviewed. They included principals, deputy principals, representatives of SSCs, and education officers working at different levels of the education system.

## A Brief Overview of the General History of Cambodia

Cambodia, sometimes known as Khmer or Kampuchea, is a small country situated in Southeast Asia and bordering Laos PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. The recent history of the country has been characterised by colonialism, conflict, genocide and poverty. It was colonised by the French in 1863, through a treaty of protection which allowed the Cambodian monarchy to remain in situ, but with power being largely vested in a resident French general (Chandler, 2008). While the French ruled the country for almost 100 years, they did little to promote national development, including in the education sector, where minimal attention was paid to promoting access to formal education amongst the population. This indicates that they clearly were not interested in preparing the population for engagement in governance (Chandler, 2008).

Cambodia gained independence from France in 1953. The early post-colonial era was one of prosperity and development, brought about

through the leadership shown by King Sihanouk. However, the country gradually descended into political turmoil and civil wars, culminating in massive genocide in the 1970s (Chandler, 2008). This resulted in a great loss of human life, destruction of physical infrastructure, destruction of socio-cultural and economic structures, and extensive poverty (Ayres, 2003; Chandler, 2008). Significant social and political change occurred following the withdrawal of the Vietnamese from the country in the late 1980s. The Paris Peace Accord, formally known as the 'Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict', was signed on 23 October 1991. It paved the way for national reconciliation. The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was established in 1992.

The following year a general election was organized and overseen by UNTAC. An outcome was the formulation of a coalition government, with Cambodia being a constitutional monarchy under King Sihanouk as head of the state (Chandler, 2008). Armed fighting, however, was still taking place in some parts of the country, and especially in provinces along the Thai border during this period. Then, in 1994, thousands of Khmer Rouge soldiers surrendered under a government amnesty. The end of major conflict came about following the holding of a national election in 1998, although the previous year some prominent politicians had lost their lives during a coup (Chandler, 2008).

Post-conflict governments in Cambodia, with support from international multilateral donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), worked to promote peace and political stability and laid a strong foundation for rapid and inclusive economic growth and social advances. Indeed, Cambodia made remarkable progress in promoting its economic development, experiencing an average annual growth rate of 7.6 percent between 1994 and 2015 (World Bank, 2017). This contributed to reducing the national poverty level line from 47.8 percent in 2007 to 13.5 percent in 2014. Nevertheless, it has been reported that approximately 4.5 million people still live just marginally above the poverty line, which means that they earn less than USD 3 per day (ADB, 2015; World Bank, 2017).

Considerable progress has been made in advancing social change throughout Cambodia, leading to an increase in literacy rates, the promotion of formal and informal education and training, an increase in

knowledge about healthcare, an improvement in female participation in various aspects of society, and an increase in knowledge and understanding about human rights and active citizenship (Dennis & Kem, 2015). At the same time, a number of social challenges remain. These include only limited economic opportunities being available for many in rural and remote communities, a gap between one's level of education and level of employment, and a high rate of migration.

An understanding of school leadership in Cambodia needs to be based on a grasp of this broad international context. Equally, it is important to consider it within the context of colonialism and education, postcolonialism and education, 'old wars' and 'new wars', and education in conflict and post-conflict environments. These contexts will now be briefly considered in the remainder of this section of the present chapter, and they will be returned to in greater detail in the next chapter.

Colonialism became widespread in different parts of the world during the industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th century. It was a ruling system aimed at gaining partial or full control over another territory for economic purposes (Nwanosike & Onyije, 2011). Education was used by colonisers to fulfill their economic ambitions and to maintain and strengthen their power over colonial territories (Bray, 1993; Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982). This resulted in education policies and practices during the colonial period being influenced and controlled by the colonisers.

Kelly and Altbach (1978) have identified four ways in which colonisers had an influence on education. The first colonial influence relates to the relationship between school and society in colonised societies (Kelly & Altbach, 1978). This relationship differed from that in non-colonised societies and was reflected in the teaching of languages and social values that did not complement the cultures of the colonised (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Sua, 2013; White, 1996). The second colonial influence in education relates to the organisation and structure of the education system (Kelly & Altbach, 1978). The organisation of schools in most colonised countries very much reflected that of the metropolitan schools (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; O'Brien, 1980; O'Donoghue, 2009; Sua, 2013). The third colonial influence in education was related to the content of schooling (Kelly & Altbach, 1978). In particular, while the language of

instruction was very often the language of the colonisers, a combination of languages was often also used in colonial schools (Kelly & Altbach, 1978). Finally, the fourth colonial influence was instrumental in fulfilling the needs and perceptions of the colonisers rather than those of the colonised (Bray, 1993; Kelly & Altbach, 1978).

Colonial education policies and practices have continued to influence education development in many postcolonial countries. Hickling-Hudson, Matthews, and Woods (2004) have pointed out that education systems in postcolonial countries have been built upon Western ideologies of curriculum, language, pedagogy and religion. While acknowledging this, one also needs to take into account the impact of wars and conflict on education in post-conflict nations. In this regard, political scientists have recently used the terms 'old wars' and 'new wars' to explain the changing nature and conduct of war (Newman, 2004; Kaldor, 2012, 2005). 'Old wars' refer to an idealised version of war that took place in Europe between the late 18th and the middle of the 20th century (Kaldor, 2005). This form of war was usually recognised through a fight between states using armed forces in uniform and where the decisive encounter was the battle. The main responsibility of the state during 'old wars' was to protect the state and its people from being attacked by others. In this way, the state earned its legitimacy (Kaldor, 2005, 2012).

In contrast, 'new wars' refers to irregular, informal wars that developed in the last decades of the 20th century in various parts of the world, but especially in Africa and Eastern Europe (Kaldor, 2012). This form of war can be intrastate and can be fought by networks of state and non-state actors, often without uniforms (Kaldor, 2005). Also, it involves the deliberate use of brutality against civilians and dramatic human displacement (Newman, 2004).

Education systems in post-new war contexts can be severely affected by, and have to confront, multiple challenges. Indeed, evidence from the field suggests that armed conflict can have a substantial impact on education systems and on the provision of education in conflict-affected societies in several ways (Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; Paulson, 2011a, 2011b; Seitz, 2004; Smith, 2009; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). First, violent conflict can involve the destruction of education infrastructure and resources required to keep an education system functioning

(Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011). Secondly, it can be associated with killing, injuring, kidnapping and abducting students, teachers, academics and education personnel (O'Malley, 2010; UENSCO, 2011). Thirdly, households can be displaced (Justino, 2014), thus disrupting both the schooling calendar and learning opportunities for children (Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011). Fourthly, armed fighting can have an effect on the psychological state of children and teachers (O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011).

Post-conflict societies can feel the effects of violence long after a war has ended. These can include insufficient domestic revenue being available to operate the education system, a severe shortage of qualified teachers, an oversupply of under-qualified teachers, a lack of skills' training for youth, poor record keeping, a high number of illiterate people, corruption, and a lack of accountability and transparency in educational management (Buckland, 2006). On this, O'Malley (2010) has identified five broad areas in which violent conflict can have an effect on education reconstruction in post-conflict societies. These relate to teachers and teaching, students and learning, infrastructure, the management of education, and the symbolic effect on curtailment of the commitment to the right of education (O'Malley, 2010).

Recently, researchers have also given more attention than previously to understanding relationships between education and conflict, and the role of education in the reconstruction of conflict-affected nations (Paulson, 2011a, 2011b; Paulson & Rappleye, 2007; Smith, 2009; Van Wessel & van Hirtum, 2012; World Bank, 2005). Studies have shown that education can have an influence on conflict both by fuelling violence and by reducing the risk of it (Davies, 2005; Hodgkin, 2006; Smith, 2005; World Bank, 2005). Also, in relation to education reconstruction in post-conflict societies, Arnhold, Bekker, Kersh, McLeish and Phillips (1996) suggested over 20 years ago that there are four broad areas of reconstruction that usually need special attention. These are physical reconstruction, curricular reform, ideological reconstruction and psychological reconstruction.

Some researchers have argued that education reconstruction in post-conflict settings is often informed more by theoretical assumptions rather than by rigorous research-based evidence (Weinstein, Freedman, &

Hughson, 2007). In particular, there can be a lack of sensitivity to local circumstances in producing education proposals. The needs and voices of the most affected groups, namely, children, parents, teachers and school leaders, are not often well reflected in associated education development plans, and particularly in those relating to the curriculum. The content of the curriculum and the proposed teaching approaches may not, as a result, address the practical concerns of the key stakeholders. In this connection, it has been concluded that the absence of stakeholder representation at meetings on important policy initiatives can be a factor contributing to failure to achieve universal primary school education (World Bank, 2005). Also, more critically-informed and policy relevant research in this emerging area of inquiry is required (Davies, 2005; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Paulson, 2011a; Paulson & Rappleye, 2007).

## Structure of the Book

This chapter is followed by another six. Chapter 2 depicts the broad international context within which the study took place. It provides greater detail on issues mentioned already, including colonialism and education, post-colonialism and education, and 'old wars' and 'new wars'. The chapter concludes with an overview of the literature concerning the complex relationships between education and conflict. Having such a broad knowledge base in relation to relevant aspects of post-conflict settings can help one to better understand education in post-conflict Cambodia within an international context.

Chapter 3 provides an overview on the main bodies of academic literature relating to the study. It begins with a brief portrayal of leadership theories and educational leadership and management theories. It then considers the literature on educational leadership in developing-country contexts, with an emphasis on the general education landscape, leadership preparation and development, and the nature of school leadership in such contexts. In particular, the literature in relation to educational leadership in post-conflict nations is considered, with a concentration on the impact of conflict on education systems, on approaches to education reconstruction in those contexts, and on challenges faced by school

leaders and how they deal with them. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the literature pertaining to educational leadership in post-conflict Cambodia.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 report the results of the study upon which the main body of the book is based. Chapter 4 addresses the first two research questions and is divided into two main parts. The first part presents the historical background to leadership at the primary school level in Cambodia from colonial times until 1998. The second part considers the developments that have taken place in Cambodia in relation to leadership at the primary school level from the post-conflict era to the present. Chapter 5 presents the issues that are of current concern to primary school leaders as a result of Cambodia being a developing country, and the strategies they adopt to deal with those issues. Chapter 6 presents the issues that are currently of concern to leaders at the primary school level that arise from the fact that Cambodia is a post-conflict country, and how the leaders deal with those issues. Chapter 7 concludes the book. It consists of a summary of the study and a discussion of the results. Implications of the study for practice and for future research are also considered.

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# 2

# The Broad International Context

## Introduction

An understanding of school leadership at the primary school level in Cambodia, especially in relation to the historical background to primary school leadership, recent developments relating to primary school leadership, and current concerns of primary school leaders in the country needs, as has already been stated, to be based upon an appreciation of the broad international context within which these areas sit. Accordingly, this chapter now explores a number of related issues already referred to in the previous chapter. It begins with an overview of colonialism and education, and of colonial legacies on education systems in postcolonial nations internationally. It then sheds light on the nature of wars, with an emphasis on 'old wars' and 'new wars'. The chapter concludes with an overview of the literature concerning the complex relationships between education and conflict.


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## An Overview of Colonialism and Education

A considerable amount of literature on colonialism is available to explain its presence in different contexts and at different times in human history. The spread of Hellenic and Roman culture and technology by the Roman Empire, and the advent of the Renaissance and of the enlightenment of the 15th and 16th century, all contributed to the emergence of colonialism (Nwanosike & Onyije, 2011; Watson, 1982). Also, the practice became widespread in different parts of the world, including, America, Africa and Asia, especially during the industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th century (Watson, 1982). On this, Nwanosike and Onyije (2011) pointed out that the industrial revolution in Europe led to the growth of inequalities in wealth and income distribution, and that this resulted in a shortage of domestic investment. The situation eventually forced some nations to shift their attention towards economically underexploited regions (Nwanosike & Onyije, 2011; Watson, 1982).

Modern colonialism commenced with the economic expansion of Britain, France, Spain and the Netherlands to different parts of the world through trading (Watson, 1982). At an early stage, the principal interest was in carrying on business, making profit, and sharing it with shareholders. Attention to the social welfare and education of the people with whom the colonisers were dealing was neglected (Watson, 1982). Indeed, economic expansion was heavily associated with exploitation. The expansion of the British economy and the importation of labour from China to Malaya in the early 1800s, for example, led to serious economic exploitation which resulted in very few indigenous Malays being able to participate in the wage-labour force associated with substantial agricultural and industrial work (O'Brien, 1980; Sua, 2013). Rather, the work was largely undertaken by immigrants from India and China. Also, in Africa, the use of local labour led to the creation of wealth which contributed to the national development of the colonising countries (Nwanosike & Onyije, 2011).

Gradually, colonising countries shifted their interests and attitudes to imposing social, political, religious and constitutional practices on the colonised countries in order to gain control over the local people (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Walter, 1992; Watson, 1982). Regarding education,

colonisers usually came with a set of education ideas that were drawn upon to fulfill their economic ambitions and to maintain and strengthen their power over colonial territories (Basu, 1978; Bryant, 2015; Kelly & Altbach, 1978). This means that because colonisers took control over the political, economic and social institutions of colonised countries, education policies and practices in the colonies were determined very much by the colonisers.

On the latter, Kelly and Altbach (1978) have identified four ways that colonisers were able to influence education. In general, colonial schools were disconnected from the society and culture of the colonised nations and were often established without attention being paid to the needs of the society and culture of the indigenous populations (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982). Rather, they reflected the power and the education needs of the colonisers and of some indigenous groups associated with policy making (Bray, 1993; Gallego & Woodberry, 2010; Kelly & Altbach, 1978). This was often mirrored in the teaching of languages and social values that did not complement the education and cultural practices of the people of colonised nations (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Sua, 2013; Watson, 1982; White, 1996).

The colonial influence was also reflected in the organisation and structure of schooling systems. Two distinct school systems existed in many colonies, namely, metropolitan schools and vernacular schools (Frankema, 2012; Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982). Metropolitan schools were mainly established in colonised countries to serve the children of the colonisers and of the rich who could pay high tuition fees (Bray, 1993; Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982). Their organisation very much reflected the organisation of schools for the elite in Europe. This was also reflected in the language of instruction in tests, in text books used and in curricula (Kelly & Altbach, 1978). Vernacular schools, by contrast, existed predominantly in rural areas in most colonies and they mainly served the children of the ingenious populations (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982). The focus was on basic primary school education rather than on higher levels of education (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; O'Brien, 1980; O'Donoghue, 2009; Sua, 2013; Watson, 1982).

Kelly and Altbach (1978) have also identified two common characteristics of the school curriculum that distinguished the colonial

curriculum from that in metropolitan schools. These, again, were the languages used and the type of knowledge imparted. Evidence indicates that the language of instruction in colonial schools was normally that of the colonial power (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982). This was the case, for example, in the British and French colonies. Indigenous languages were used in some schools, but largely only as a stepping stone to acquiring the language of the coloniser (Kelly & Altbach, 1978). Also, the colonial curriculum was not geared towards promoting adult literacy, vocational education and higher education (Watson, 1982). Rather, it concentrated on moral education, history, geography, drawing, and computational skills (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982) at an elementary level.

The purpose of education also reflected the interests of the colonisers (Kelly & Altbach, 1978). As has been pointed out already, although colonisers from different countries approached schooling differently, they shared a common view that it should be instrumental in fulfilling their needs and perceptions rather than those of the colonised. This had an influence on the provision of education in the colonies, including in relation to education opportunity, education type, and the amount of schooling provided (Bray, 1993).

The literature on colonialism and education also indicates that missionaries played a significant role in the development of education in the colonies and in the implementation of colonial policy (Bray, 1993; Gallego & Woodberry, 2010; Kelly & Altbach, 1978; O'Donoghue, 2009; Watson, 1982). Woodberry (2004) reported that they helped to provide more than 90 percent of formal education in sub-Saharan Africa during the colonial period. This was because colonial governments were initially more concerned with matters of economic development and maintenance of law and order, than they were with education and social welfare. Nevertheless, education conducted largely by missionary groups got some support from the colonising powers (Bray, 1993; Gallego & Woodberry, 2010; Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982). This, however, does not mean that colonial governments and missionary groups shared the same view on how education should be developed and offered. In this connection, scholars have indicated that missionary groups often ignored the proposals of colonial governments that they should focus on

vocational training and education (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982). Rather, they preferred to emphasise moral education.

The aim of missionary education was concerned with 'proselytising', namely, the conversion of indigenous people to Christianity (Gallego & Woodberry, 2010; O'Brien, 1980; Watson, 1982). It emphasised the standards of behaviour and morality of Christian Europe. This took place in different parts of the world. In Malaya, for instance, education provided by missionary bodies and by private agencies during the colonial era revolved particularly around 'Christianity' and Western culture (O'Brien, 1980). This situation was also promoted in the Philippines, where Catholicism was introduced by the Spaniards to convert local residents and to maintain them in that faith (Schwartz, 1971). This aim was achieved through the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy to students so that they became able to read religious texts and fulfil religious obligations (Schwartz, 1971; Watson, 1982). In relation to Nigeria, Gallego and Woodberry (2010) reported that schooling was especially instrumental in converting local people to a new religion.

Although colonial governments and missionary groups had different views on education development in their colonies, they used education as a means to achieve their own ends. Because there was no input from, and consent on the part of, the colonised, education has been viewed as something that had a negative impact on traditional education and culture in particular settings. Missionary education, for example, is seen to have had a detrimental effect on indigenous and traditional education, as well as on Buddhist monastic schools, on Hindu temple schools, and on Koranic schools (Watson, 1982).

The influence of colonial schooling policy on colonies was not without reaction. This varied from support to opposition, depending upon the geographical location, the issue, and the historical period (Bryant, 2015; O'Donoghue, 2009; Watson, 1982). Some groups viewed colonial education as a means of gaining social mobility and status. Thus, they did not reject colonial schooling models. This was the case, for example, amongst some in Ghana and Nigeria, where families placed a high value on colonial education as they saw that it could help in getting their children into white-collar employment upon graduation from school (Watson, 1982).

Groups in other parts of the world rejected colonial education policy, especially in relation to the education of girls and women. This was often because they feared the girls would lose interest in the family (Watson, 1982). Also, there were groups who were opposed to colonial education in all of its manifestations. This was particularly the case in Vietnam, Morocco and Algeria, where there was significant opposition to French education (Watson, 1982).

Education also came to be seen by the colonised as an instrument for promoting social change and gaining independence from the coloniser. On this, Bryant (2015) has pointed out that colonial education contributed to developing the population of colonies who later challenged the legitimacy of the colonial state and paved the way for political independence. In Malaysia, for instance, anti-British sentiment was ignited by the Malay-educated intelligentsia, who encouraged the growth of a spirit of nationalism (Sua, 2013). The associated radical movement was neutralised by the Malay traditional elites who eventually led the Malays toward independence. In parts of Africa, education was harnessed to help to bring political independence to colonised African nations (Nwanosike & Onyije, 2011). For example, well-educated African elites jointly created the National Congress of British West Africa to articulate and promote action to bring colonial rule to an end.

## An Overview of Post-colonialism and Education

There seems to be no universal definition of the term 'post-colonialism'. It is associated with theories of imperialism, modernity, racism, ethnicity, cultural geography and post-modernism (Darian-Smith, 1996). Some scholars define 'post-colonialism' as the transition from colonialism to self-determination, and use the term to describe sociocultural changes that have taken place following decolonisation (Darian-Smith, 1996; Rassool, 2007; Tikly, 1999, 2001). It is also helpful to think of it as an active process of change taking place between the colonised countries and their colonisers. This means that colonialism is not over. Indeed, it has for

some time been agreed that its modalities and effects are being transformed as a result of globalisation (Crossley & Tikly, 2004; Tikly, 1999, 2001).

Often, post-colonial nations can remain within a global system of economic and cultural domination which is shaped by the former colonisers (Hickling-Hudson, Matthews, & Woods, 2004). The former colonialist powers can adopt a neo-colonial approach to indirectly dominate their former colonies economically, politically, culturally, and even militarily (Tikly, 1999). In relation to this, Rassool (2007, p. 5) has stated:

> Within the global arena, national states are part of an interdependent world system underpinned by interactive, dynamic economic, cultural and political inter-relationships and inter-dependencies. Post-colonialism therefore has to be seen also in relation to the 'evolution of new social relations' within the global terrain defined by interactive information, cultural and capital flows.

Accordingly, it is not surprising that colonial education policies and practices have continued to influence the development of many post-colonial nations. For example, education development within post-colonial settings has been considered by some to involve the expansion of colonial education (Hickling-Hudson, 2011; Watson, 1982), thus promoting colonial ideologies of curriculum, language, pedagogy and assessment (Hickling-Hudson, 2011; Hickling-Hudson et al., 2004). Often, the main efforts are focused on primary school education and secondary school education, with little emphasis being placed on education at a higher level. Also, the education offered can tend to favour elites and ignore the interests of indigenous populations (Hickling-Hudson, 2011). It can, therefore, contribute to promoting uneven distribution of schools between regions and races, and to perpetuating social and economic inequalities in such contexts (Hickling-Hudson, 2011; Watson, 1982).

Another influence of colonial education within post-colonial settings which has long been recognised relates to its impact on the perspectives of people in post-colonial nations (Watson, 1982). Colonial education in some places was established by colonisers to train indigenous elites to become future leaders in independent states who would then cooperate

with them. Such education set these elites apart from the larger indigenous populations. On this, Watson (1982, p. 36) stated that "they became Westernised in manners, behaviour, outlook, dress, interests, style of living and as a result, once in the seat of power, became more colonial in their attitudes than was the white man."

An additional legacy of colonial education in post-colonial nations which was recognised by Watson (1982) relates to the creation of a colonial-style bureaucratic system. One aim of colonial education was to train indigenous people to take up administrative work within the colonial environment. Many of these people continued to run the bureaucratic system along colonial lines when a country became independent. They also continued to enjoy colonial working practices in relation to power structures, promotion procedures and prestige. As a result, they came to be apart from the rest of the population in a country. Thus, colonialism contributed, on the one hand, to the creation of 'multi-racial and cultural communities' living side by side within the same political environments. On the other hand, post-colonial education also helped to promote a sense of nationalism among different groups in various societies through a school curriculum which frequently dealt with issues relating to democracy, nationalism, liberalism and justice (Watson, 1982).

Another significant legacy of colonialism within post-colonial settings is that of 'neo-colonialism'. This was defined over 35 years ago as referring to the domination of industrialised nations over developing world nations which officially are independent (Kelly & Altbach, 1978; Watson, 1982). It relates to a continuation of past colonial practices and deliberate attempts by colonial rulers to maintain their influence in their former colonies. Within post-colonial education environments, the influence of neo-colonialism has for long been recognised as being reflected in "foreign aid programmes, capital aid for buildings, technical assistance training, publishing firms, newspaper publishing, the media, recognition of examinations and diplomas, research links between universities in the Third World and in the North" (Watson, 1982, p. 41).

Scholars have, however, indicated that within some postcolonial settings education systems have had to confront issues of racism and culture (Hickling-Hudson, 2010; Tikly, 1999). These can relate to curriculum content, textbooks, and education policies built upon colonial models

(Hickling-Hudson, 2011; Hickling-Hudson et al., 2004). They can have an influence on how social identities are constructed and how these influence the learning of children. In this regard, Hickling-Hudson (2010) explained that colonial curricula usually incorporated race and social power and that they continued to mould inequality among different sociocultural groups. For example, in their study of racism in the Eurocentric curriculum provided in indigenous and multicultural primary schools in Australia and the USA, Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) noted a lack of a critical view of culture which could facilitate learners to see both positive and negative sides of all cultures. They stressed that the absence of such a critical view in the curriculum could result in institutional racism, stereotyping and social determinism (Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003).

While some post-colonial nations continued to adopt colonial education models that promoted European cultures and devalued local cultures (Hickling-Hudson, 2010; Hickling-Hudson et al., 2004), others tried to establish alternative forms of education, especially in relation to curricula that were deemed to be more appropriate to the cultures and histories of local populations (Tikly, 1999). However, it remained a huge challenge for them to define a culturally relevant curriculum. This is because curriculum reform has to contend with the vested interests of local elites, a lack of resources, and the hegemony of Western culture and those forms of knowledge prevalent in an increasingly global world (Bray, 1993; Tikly, 1999).

Tikly (1999) identified two approaches that have been commonly adopted to respond to the hegemony of Western culture in the school curriculum. The first approach concerns the replacement of one conception of reality and truth with a non-Eurocentric view. This was the case in South Africa, where a Western curriculum was replaced with a modified curriculum based on African norms and values (Tikly, 1999). It involved substituting some parts of the existing curriculum with new materials premised on a positive representation of local experiences and cultures. The second approach involves adding new multicultural material to the formal curriculum (Tikly, 1999). This approach can be problematic because it may function to legitimise Eurocentric curricula by not challenging the norms and values embedded within them.

It is, therefore, important that curriculum reconstruction seeks to strike a balance between Western and indigenous interests (Hickling-Hudson, 2010). On this, Tikly (1999) proposed an alternative approach to curriculum reconstruction aligned with postcolonial theory. He proposed three related aspects. The first aspect requires replacing parts of the existing curriculum with new materials based on positive representations of non-European views. The second aspect is focused on participation by those scholars and intellectuals in the complex process of curriculum development (Tikly, 1999). This should take account of the interests of indigenous and marginalised groups (Nakata, 2006). It involves producing, distributing, and legitimising knowledge across both government and private institutions. The third aspect is related to the demonstration of rationality and interconnectedness of Western and other forms of knowledge (Tikly, 1999).

Another significant issue found within post-colonial education settings is the domination of colonial languages over indigenous languages (Hickling-Hudson, 2010, 2011; Rassool, 2007; Tikly, 1999). Colonial languages were integrated in all aspects of schooling in various colonial settings to influence the acquisition of knowledge and culture and to secure domination of resources and wealth. Such influence continued in the post-colonial era (Hickling-Hudson, 2010, 2011). This is reflected in the teaching of European languages, especially English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, in schools. These languages can influence how children acquire knowledge and culture (Hickling-Hudson, 2010, 2011).

Tikly (1999) identified two main reactions to the hegemony of colonial languages within postcolonial contexts. The first reaction is to reject a colonial language as a medium of instruction and communication and to promote local languages in education (Hickling-Hudson, 2011; Tikly, 1999; Watson, 1982). The second response is to recognise linguistic and cultural identity as contested and contingent. This latter view is more congruent with the complexities of postcolonial situations (Tikly, 1999).

While some postcolonial nations have struggled to reform their schooling systems with regard to curriculum, language, pedagogy, and assessment, others have already gone beyond this to adopt inclusive education reforms. These include community involvement, adult basic education, child-centred pedagogies, health reform, and various strategies designed

to provide some opportunities for the disadvantaged (Hickling-Hudson, 2010). Further, the boundaries of education in postcolonial contexts have expanded to meet the challenges of globalisation. These include basic technical and vocational skills-training, bilingual education with scientific training for new economies, and training in local school leadership with preparation for radical pedagogies (Luke, 2005).

## Old Wars and New Wars

A plethora of literature on war has become available to explain the nature of the wars that have taken place at different times in the history of human kind. Decades ago, Von Clausewitz (1966) referred to war as an act of violent conflict, accompanied by the mobilisation and organisation of physical force to press one's opponent to fulfil one's needs. The violent conflict generally involves armed fighting between integrated groups with incompatible demands. It is also associated with a set of regulations of certain types of social relationships and has its own logic (Dobra, 2011; Kaldor, 2012).

In recent years, the terms 'old wars' and 'new wars' have emerged. Political scientists use them to explain the changing nature and conduct of war (Newman, 2004). 'Old wars' refer to wars that took place in Europe between the late 18th and the middle of the 20th century (Kaldor, 2005). This form of war was usually recognised as a fight between states using armed forces in uniform, where the decisive encounter was the battle. 'Old wars' strengthened existing states and led to the emergence of new states. As Kaldor (2005, 2012) has stated, they enabled states to become monopolised through a legitimate way of organising the use of violence, terminating mercenary armies, and eventually establishing specialised, professional military forces.

The establishment of professional armed forces required sound financial support and effective administrative reform. This caused a state's economy to experience increased taxation and borrowing. Kaldor (2012) indicated that throughout the 18th century, most European states spent approximately three-quarters of their national budget on the military. This large expenditure resulted in a radical administrative reform which

aimed to increase tax-raising capabilities and to reduce the practice of corruption. Further, new financial reform mechanisms were introduced to improve the efficiency of budget expenditure and the banking system, and the creation of money was officially undertaken to extend borrowing (Kaldor, 2012).

In 'old wars', state interest became a legitimate justification for war (Kaldor, 2005, 2012). Instilling loyalty and persuading men to risk their lives to defend the state were required. Kaldor (2005) highlights that the main responsibility of the state was to protect the state and its people from being attacked by others and that it was through this protection that it earned its legitimacy. This sentiment was in line with that of Schmitt (1990), who said that '*protecto ergo obligo*' is the '*cogito ergo sum*' of the state.

Kaldor (2012) further pointed out that 'old wars' passed through several stages of development. The first entailed the application of industrial technology in the military field. It was, for example, found that the railway and telegraph allowed for a quicker and greater mobilisation of armies to take place than previously. Also, the application of science and technology eventually caused massive destruction of human life; it was estimated that about 35 million people were killed in World War I and 50 million people, half of whom were civilians, were killed in World War II (Kaldor, 2005).

A further 'development' of 'old wars' was the formulation of alliances. Importance was increasingly attached to the development and expansion of these, which led to an increase in force and power (Kaldor, 2012). The third 'development' was the codification of the 'law' of war. A growing body of associated international law emerged, including from the Geneva Convention 1864, the St Petersburg Declaration of 1868, and the Hague Conference of 1908 (Kaldor, 2012). 'Old wars', as a result, came to be fought, at least in principle, according to a new set of rules, which set a fine line between heroes and criminals, and between legitimate killing and murder (Kaldor, 2005).

'Old wars' reached their apex in the middle of the 20th century. What followed was the emergence of the high point of state building. The totalised totalitarian state and blocs of states emerged and the concepts associated with democracy were introduced in the modern state (Kaldor,

2005). In particular, post-European war alliances, especially the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact, were founded to restrain individual nation-states from fighting wars unilaterally (Kaldor, 2012). Also, "a network of military connections was established through looser alliances, the arms trade, the provision of military support and training, creating a set of patron-client relationships which also inhibited the capacity to wage war unilaterally" (Kaldor, 2012, p. 30). All of this activity resulted in very few inter-state wars taking place since 1945.

In contrast to the earlier wars, 'new wars' refer to irregular, informal wars that developed in the last decades of the 20th century in various parts of the world, but especially in Africa and Eastern Europe (Kaldor, 2012). Such wars take place within a globalised dynamic conflict and contribute to the disintegration of the state. The globalised dynamic conflict, according to Dobra (2011), is characterised by deprivation of the symbolism of the state as an instance of legitimacy and authority, and the movement of conflict toward the periphery.

'New wars' can be intrastate and can be fought by networks of state and non-state actors, often without uniforms (Kaldor, 2005). They weaken the state and erode its monopoly. This takes places through a pattern of private violence emerging to challenge the state's authority (Dobra, 2011). The non-state actors emerge and are established within a system where they hold opposing interests to the state.

The wars usually involve actions of deliberate brutality being taken against civilians and can cause dramatic human displacement (Newman, 2004). In particular, they are characterised by counter-insurgency tactics and ethnic cleansing. These, consequently, lead to a construction of new sectarian identities, which can be of a religious, ethnic or tribal nature that gradually wears away a sense of a shared political community (Kaldor, 2005).

Although 'new wars' are characterised as local, internal, or civil wars, or 'low-intensity conflicts', transnational connections and global influences, including political, economic, military and cultural change, have also been observed (Kaldor, 2012). Globalisation, according to Newman (2004), has two major impacts on 'new wars'. First, it forms the basis of changes to the state in which state authority and public goods have been

eroded, thus badly affecting social vulnerability. Secondly, it causes an increase in opportunities for economic motives and greed that can drive the force of violence (Newman, 2004). The formal economy collapses and competition between criminal groups over natural resources and illegal transnational trade, private armies, and criminal warlords can be witnessed. Also, the state can experience decreased taxation and even a financial crisis (Kaldor, 2005).

'New wars' differ from 'old wars' in terms of their goals, the modes of warfare and the war economy (Kaldor, 2012). First, the goals of the 'new wars' are concerned with the claim to power on the basis of traditional identities that are national, tribal and religious. These goals contrast with the geo-political or ideological goals of 'old wars'. On this, Kaldor (2012) explains that emerging identity politics is particularly associated with the process of globalisation in a way that results in some diasporic communities becoming influential through using ease of travel and advanced technology and communication.

Secondly, the modes of warfare of 'new wars' aim at controlling the population by getting rid of everyone of a different identity, by instilling terror, and by mobilising extremist politics based on fear and hatred (Kaldor, 2012). This is often associated with massive killing and forced human displacement, severe human rights violations, ethnic cleansing, and psychological, political and economic techniques of intimidation (Kaldor, 2012; Newman, 2004).

The third characteristic of 'new wars' is known as the new globalised war economy. This relates specifically to how the wars are financed (Kaldor, 2012). The type of associated economy is that of decentralisation, low participation, and high unemployment. Because of low domestic production caused by global competition, physical destruction, or interruption to normal trade, the war effort can be greatly dependent upon external resources (Kaldor, 2012).

Notwithstanding the explanation of the nature and conduct of 'old wars' and 'new wars' presented already, the distinction between the two remains blurred. This distinction, for instance, is not historically accurate in every detail. Kaldor (2005) recognises this. While asserting her position, she also acknowledges that 'new wars' have much in common with wars in the pre-modern period in Europe, and elsewhere. Also, some

elements of 'new wars' can possibly be found within those of 'old wars'. Newman (2004) explains that the differences can also be observed through changes in technology and socio-economics historically. Furthermore, Dobra (2011) has differentiated the two wars in terms of the dynamic and the correlation, and an increase in war-prone situations through the deconstructions of identities and structures.

Seeking to understand the differences between the terms can help one to address the realities of certain contexts and to respond to these effectively (Kaldor, 2005). It can help to reconceptualise the pattern of violence and war that is affecting many parts of the world and to seek possible solutions to stop and prevent violence from happening. Kaldor (2012, p. 12) elaborates on this, stating that the key to a long-term solution is "the restoration of legitimacy, the reconstruction of the control of organised violence by public authorities, whether local, national or global." This possible solution involves both political and legal processes. The political process includes the rebuilding of trust in, and support for, local authorities, and this requires an inclusive and democratic approach. The legal process is about the reestablishment of a rule of law within which public authorities operate (Kaldor, 2012).

The nature of the violent conflict that occurred in Cambodia between the late 1960s and the 1990s concurs with Kaldor's (2005, 2012) definition of 'new wars'. The conflict was influenced by transnational networks providing support, finance and mobilisation, and by globalised forces of a political, economic, social and cultural nature. China, for instance, provided the Khmer Rouge forces with USD 100 million per annum in weapons throughout the 1980s (Kiernan, 2002). Such foreign assistance, especially in the form of loans, was partly affected by corruption, and particularly 'political corruption'. This rendered much aid ineffective (Phy, 2010), and contributed to inequality in economic growth and chronic poverty.

## Education and Conflict

War can have a significant impact on the level of development in a country by undermining economic and social growth. In particular, education systems within conflict contexts can be severely affected and can be

confronted by multiple challenges. This section of the chapter now provides an overview of education and conflict. It starts with a brief examination of international intervention in conflict-affected contexts, outlining the stated relationships that, it is claimed, exist between education and conflict. Accordingly, the impact of violent conflict on education and the importance of education in reducing the risk of violence and constructing social cohesion are considered.

## International Intervention in Education in Conflict-Affected Contexts

Lately, the international community and donors have given more attention and support than previously to the development of education in conflict-affected countries. This trend emerged in the early 1990s, during which time there was a shift of focus in the global development agenda towards the least developed nations, and especially towards such conflict zones as those in Sub-Saharan Africa (Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2012; Paulson & Rappleye, 2007). It led to the development of the 'Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) and 'Education for All' (EFA) ideals, which were reinforced by donors during the Paris Declaration of 2005. As part of the global education agenda, these donors agreed to harmonise their efforts for the least-developed nations through what became known as the Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) (King, 2007; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2012).

The same decade saw a rise in Western humanitarian intervention, often led by the USA in critical conflict-affected zones (Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2012). The interventions focused on human security, human rights, democracy, and social justice. They were accelerated after 'the 9/11 attacks' in the USA because of concerns about development and security. The possibility of aligning international development assistance and aid effectiveness principles laid out in documents like the Paris Agenda, was eroded. As a result, lines between aid workers and soldiers, and between development issues and military strategy, became blurred and put some aid workers in danger (Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2012).

Notwithstanding the contested dynamics and nature of the development and conflict agenda, humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected situations has increased considerably since the early 1990s. By the

mid-1990s, emergency spending had increased to over US 3.5 billion (Fearon, 2008). The 2008 Reality of Aid Report showed that there had been a sharp increase of aid allocation to the 20 most severely conflict-affected countries; from 9.3 percent of total 'official development assistance' (ODA) in 2000 to 20.4 percent in 2006. The same period also witnessed a general increase of international aid to some of the countries that had witnessed the most conflict.

A considerable portion of aid was allocated to education development in conflict-affected contexts (Fearon, 2008), with a number of international development bodies leading the work. These included the 'Global Education Cluster' led by UNICEF, the 'International Save the Children', which coordinates and formulates policy associated with the education response in emergency situations, and the 'Inter-Agency Network on Education and Emergencies' (INEE), which works to promote inter-agency communication and collaboration within fragile states, and to promote effective lobbying, advocacy, policy coordination and development institutions (Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2012).

The combined efforts of donors and international humanitarian agencies have resulted in significant progress being made with regard to improving access to education, especially at the primary school level in many of the least developed countries around the world. According to the United Nations (2013), at least 590 million children in developing countries received a primary school education in 2011. However, progress has not been equally distributed around the globe (UNESCO, 2011; Winthrop & Matsui, 2013). Many war-affected countries, and countries recovering from war, enjoyed less progress and made only a slow advance towards the achievement of the MDGs and the EFA (Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; UN, 2013). In 2011, it was estimated that more than 28 million children of primary school age were not at school in conflict-affected countries (UNESCO, 2011).

## Relationships Between Education and Conflict

Researchers have recently given more attention than previously to understanding the relationships between education and conflict, and the role of education in reconstructing conflict-affected nations (Paulson, 2011a,

2011b; Paulson & Rappleye, 2007; Smith, 2005, 2009, 2010; Van Wessel & van Hirtum, 2012; World Bank, 2005). Studies have shown that armed conflict can have a devastating impact on education systems and on the provision of education in conflict-affected societies in several ways (Davies, 2005; Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; Paulson, 2011a, 2011b; Seitz, 2004; Smith, 2005, 2009, 2010; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). One of the most obvious relates to the destruction of education infrastructure and resources required to keep an education system functioning (Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; Smith, 2005, 2010; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). Education infrastructure and institutions are symbols of state authority and teachers are often seen as leaders in their communities (O'Malley, 2010; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). Therefore, they can become a target of violence during conflict. Also, schools sometimes become a target of deliberate attacks because they may be used as military bases, detention centres, training grounds for soldiers, and weapons' warehouses (O'Malley, 2010; UENSCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). Furthermore, the deliberate destruction of schools can be a military strategy aimed at destabilising associated areas and disrupting communities (O'Malley, 2010; UNESCO, 2011).

Armed conflict can also have a destructive impact on education through loss of life, physical abuses and psychological trauma experienced by students, teachers, education personnel, and community members (O'Malley, 2007, 2010; UENSCO, 2011). Teachers and students are frequently direct victims of armed conflict and can get killed, be kidnapped, or be forced to leave their communities (O'Malley, 2007, 2010; Seitz, 2004; UENSCO, 2011). In the decade up to 2005, over 2 million children died in the course of conflicts and at least 6 million children were seriously injured or permanently disabled (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). There was also forced recruitment of children into armed forces. This was often done through abduction (Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2007, 2010; Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011). While some children acted as soldiers, others worked as porters, messengers, cooks, and helpers, and as providers of sex services. In 2004 and 2005, it was estimated that at least 300,000 child soldiers under the age of 18 were associated with armed forces in active conflict situations worldwide (Seitz, 2004; World Bank, 2005).

Studies have also indicated that teachers and education personnel are often attacked during conflict. On this, the World Bank (2005) reported that in Rwanda more than two-thirds of primary school and secondary school teachers died or fled the country during the genocide of the 1990s. Such a situation also prevailed in other countries, including Cambodia, Burundi, and East Timor (Seitz, 2004; World Bank, 2005). In addition, sexual violence has been reported to have accompanied armed conflict in Bangladesh, Bosnia, Liberia and Rwanda (UNESCO, 2011). Such experiences can damage the psychological state of teachers and students and have a negative impact on education (Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005).

One significant consequence of attacks against civilians is displacement. This can have implications for individuals, for society and for education (Justino, 2014; UNESCO, 2011). In 2015, there were at least 59.5 million people worldwide who had been forcibly displaced as a result of conflict. This number was at the highest level since the immediate post-World World II period (UNHCR, 2015). More than half of the displacement was as a result of cross-border refugees. Others are internally displaced people (World Bank, 2005).

Displacement, either within a country's borders, or across borders, can disrupt the operation of education and learning opportunities for children (Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). In these circumstances, access to education can be a major challenge. Justino (2014), for example, indicates that education may be available in some camps, but when this is the case it is usually focused on primary school education and can be disorganised, short-lived, under-resourced and overcrowded. Also, regular attendance at school may not be possible for primary school-aged children as their labour may be required by their families. Related to this, UNHCR (2009) reported in 2009 that in 2008, the primary school participation rate of refugee children was 69 percent and the participation rate at the secondary school level was only 38 percent.

There is also evidence indicating that there can be a decline in student enrolment and school attendance rates during times of intense conflict (Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). UNESCO (2011) reported that at least 28 million children of primary school age

did not attend school in conflict-affected countries in 2011. Children in such contexts can also be highly likely to drop out of primary school because of a lack of school facilities, insufficient teachers, and insecurity (Seitz, 2004). The situation can be compounded by economic hardship experienced by families who often remove their children from schools to replace the lost household labour, or who cannot afford to cover such costs as those of uniforms, school fees, learning materials and transportation (Justino, 2014). Further, drop-out rates as students progress through primary school can be substantial, with the level of attrition being between 65 percent and 86 percent depending upon geographical location and the economic situation of the country in question (UNESCO, 2011).

Unequal provision of education opportunities for children can reinforce national inequalities in conflict-affected societies (Justino, 2014; UNESCO, 2011). Some individuals, households, and groups, may not be allowed to gain access to schooling while conflict is taking place because of restrictions on population movements, or because of the use of education and schools to control populations and territories (Justino, 2014). Sometimes, particular religious or ethnic groups can have their right to education withdrawn. Also, certain languages and subjects can be made compulsory in the school curriculum even though they may not be provided for all (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Justino, 2014; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). Such problems can impede the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA), universal primary education, and the achievement of gender equality in primary schools and secondary schools (UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005).

Education can also have an influence on conflict either by fuelling violence or reducing the risk of it (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005; Hodgkin, 2006; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Smith, 2005, 2009; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). It can serve as a means by which social and cultural values are transmitted from generation to generation. This can shape understandings and attitudes and, ultimately, the actions of individuals (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Smith, 2009, 2010). As a result, education can have either a constructive or a destructive impact on individuals in a society.

One way in which education can contribute to violent conflict is by producing or reproducing socio-economic inequalities between groups in a society (Brown, 2011; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005; World Bank, 2005). Education systems constitute one of the most important institutions through which inequalities along gender, ethnic, religious, class and economic dimensions can be constructed and maintained (Brown, 2011; Davies, 2005). They can prevent some groups from gaining access to education resources, thus excluding them from full participation in economic and social life (Brown, 2011; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005). As a result, relations between groups within a society may deteriorate. This can also increase the likelihood of conflict (Brown, 2011; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005).

Education systems can also generate conflict by creating cultural preferences (Brown, 2011; Davies, 2005). This situation can be found in pluralistic societies where different ethnic and religious groups may be given preference when it comes to different types of education. This can create conflict, particularly in those societies in which minority cultures and identities are not recognised in the school curriculum, or minority groups are ill-prepared to participate in the social and economic world (Brown, 2011). Thus, the education system can produce perceptions of marginalisation and cultural inequality, and provoke tension between groups (Brown, 2011; Davies, 2005).

In addition, education systems can create political exclusion (Brown, 2011; Smith, 2009, 2010; World Bank, 2005). One example of such exclusion can be found in segregated education. This can promote inequality between groups in society by creating discrimination between, and humiliation in children of particular ethnic or religious groups (Brown, 2011; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005; World Bank, 2005). In some societies, children from minority groups often leave school with a deep distrust of state institutions and without the knowledge and skills required to participate in the world (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Their lack of preparation can lead to 'institutionalised racism', which can contribute to feelings of exclusion, intolerance and also possibly to conflict (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005).

The manipulation of the school curriculum can also be a powerful means through which a government can dominate particular ethnic or

religious groups in a society. This may be evident in the teaching of history, in textbook development and in the prescribed language of instruction (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). A new version of history is often created when a new government comes into power. It may highlight selected events of war and victory and ignore achievements that have been made in peacetime (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005). As such, what is taught through the history books can foster tension between different groups. In this connection, Bush and Saltarelli (2000) have stated that the emphasis on war in history books can construct a view that violence is a legitimate expression of political power. Also, the imposition of a dominant language on ethnic groups can lead to cultural repression, resulting on occasions in some groups standing up to protect their cultural and linguistic rights (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

Other means through which education systems can engage in conflict include the use of schools to recruit, indoctrinate, radicalise, and train soldiers (Brown, 2011). Education can also be used as a weapon of war. This can occur when relations between ethnic groups have arrived at a point of great tension. Schools may be closed or destroyed in order to erode civilian support processes and punish insurgents (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

At the same time, education can help to prevent or reduce violence through initiatives focused on peacebuilding, social justice, equality and inclusive citizenship (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005; Smith, 2010). It can offer immediate benefits for children through the provision of physically safe spaces for learning, for psychological development, and for interaction with others (Smith, 2009). In this way, it can help to restore peace, social unity, tolerance and democracy, in the hope that this, in turn, will help to promote economic recovery and nation development (Davies, 2005; Smith, 2010; Weinstein, Freedman, & Hughson, 2007; World Bank, 2005).

## Conclusion

This chapter has provided the broad international context within which the study reported later in this book took place. It opened by examining the literature on colonialism globally, with a particular emphasis on its relationships with education, as well as its legacies with regard to

education development in post-colonial nations. The focus then shifted to an overview of the dynamics and nature of wars that have taken place throughout human history by highlighting the associated terms of old wars and new wars.

The chapter also considered the impact of wars and conflict on education in conflict-affected nations. It presented an overview of the rise of humanitarian intervention in these contexts. It further indicated the complex relationships that can exist between education and conflict, emphasising the impact that conflict can have on education and how education can contribute to generating violence or reducing the risk of it. Such considerations help to illuminate the contexts surrounding the historical background to, recent developments in relation to, and current concerns of leaders at the primary school level in Cambodia. The next chapter will now provide an overview of the relevant academic literature in relation to these areas.

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# 3

# Educational Leadership in Developing Countries and in Post-New War Countries

## Introduction

While there is a growing body of work on education in conflict and post-conflict societies, it was noted over ten years ago that academic research within the area was somewhat limited (Johnson & Van Kalmthout, 2006; Tomlinson & Benefield, 2005). This is still the situation. Also, much of what does exist is derived more from monitoring and evaluating work undertaken by international development bodies in countries affected by war, than from rigorous research in the social sciences (Paulson, 2011). Therefore, a gap exists between theoretical and practical perspectives on education in conflict-affected societies (Paulson & Rappleye, 2007; Tomlinson & Benefield, 2005). This deficit calls for an urgent dialogue to take place between scholars and policy makers. It also means that more critically-informed and policy-relevant research in this emerging area of inquiry is required (Davies, 2005; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Paulson, 2011; Paulson & Rappleye, 2007).

While only a limited amount of research has been undertaken on education in conflict-affected societies, even less has been undertaken on leadership at the individual school level in such contexts. Certainly, a


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wide range of research projects on educational leadership has been conducted, but much of it has concentrated on well-established and relatively stable contexts (Bush, 2014; Nawab, 2011; Oplatka, 2004). The main investigations have been on issues relating to school improvement and effectiveness (Bush, 2008, 2009, 2012; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009), school leadership and student learning achievement (Jacobson & Ylimaki, 2011; Leithwood, Janttzi, & Steinbach, 1998; Leithwood & Massey, 2010; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010), school leadership and change (Cravens & Hallinger, 2012; Fullan, 2001; Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992), and school leadership and culture (Dimmock & Walker, 2000; Hargreaves, 1995). However, there are very few empirical studies that can be drawn upon in an attempt to understand the context and nature of school leadership in post-conflict settings at an international level (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013a).

This chapter now provides further contextualisation to the study reported later by providing an overview of the related academic literature. It begins with an overview of the literature on educational leadership and management generally, with a focus on general leadership theories and theories of leadership and management in education. It goes on to examine the literature on educational leadership in developing-country contexts. The literature concerning educational leadership in post-conflict nations is then considered. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the literature pertaining to educational leadership in post-conflict Cambodia.

## Educational Leadership and Management

The last few decades have seen numerous education reforms and school restructuring changes aimed at improving equitable access to education, promoting education quality and enhancing learning outcomes. To this end, scholars, policy makers, and practitioners have recognised the importance of leadership and management at all levels of education, and especially at the school level (Bush, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014). This point has been made by Wart (2003) as follows:

> Effective leadership provides higher-quality and more efficient goods and services; it provides a sense of cohesiveness, personal development, and

> higher levels of satisfaction among those conducting the work; and it provides an overarching sense of direction and vision, an alignment with the environment, a healthy mechanism for innovation and creativity, and a resource for invigorating the organisational culture. (p. 214)

Indeed, the quality of leadership, it has been argued, can help to produce significant education outcomes and especially to improve student learning achievement (Bush, 2008).

While there is an increased recognition of the importance of leadership and management as an essential component of education change efforts, it remains unclear which leadership practices can best produce the desirable outcomes (Bush, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014). Some models of leadership have been constructed to provide school leaders with a variety of leadership practices which they can both adopt and adapt when confronting problems and dealing with daily school operations.

## General Leadership Theories

Leadership theories have often focused on characteristics of leadership, on behaviours of leaders, on influence over followers, and on situational factors that determine an effective approach to leadership (Yukl, 1989). One theory of leadership which was dominant in the 19th century was entitled the 'Great Man Theory.' Well-known associated exponents of this theory who attempted to explain the qualities of great leaders were Nietzsche, James, Carlyle, and Galton (Vroom & Jago, 2007; Wart, 2003). They suggested that great leaders are born with such distinctive qualities as personal charisma, moral force, intelligence, confidence and social skills, all of which set them apart from their followers. However, some have argued that great leaders emerge as a result of time, place, and circumstances (Stogdill, 1974). Also, the 'Great Man Theory' failed to take into account the greatness of such female leaders as Joan of Arc, Elizabeth I, Clara Barton and Catherine The Great (Wart, 2003).

Another major theory of leadership that has been popular in the mainstream leadership literature throughout the 20th century is 'trait theory'. What was proposed was similar to the 'Great Man theory' in that it sought to explain leadership in terms of traits relating to personality,

physical appearance, social background, intelligence and ability (Northouse, 2007, 2013; Taylor, 1994; Yukl, 2012; Wart, 2003). Leaders, according to this theory, are endowed with superior qualities that distinguish them from their followers (Northouse, 2007, 2013; Stogdill, 1974; Yukl, 2012). While many trait studies were designed during the 1930s and 1940s, and were conducted to identify those qualities, they did not yield consistent results (Wart, 2003; Yukl, 2012). Researchers have stated that most early studies related to trait theory were inconclusive and that the traits tentatively identified as crucial in one study were not found to be crucial in another study (Northouse, 2007, 2013; Taylor, 1994; Wart, 2003). Also, while the list of traits became endless as the studies continued, they offered only limited assistance to practitioners (Northouse, 2007, 2013; Wart, 2003).

Later, the focus of leadership research shifted from seeking to explain what effective leaders are, to seeking to explain what effective leaders do. This approach, called 'behavioural leadership,' was popular in the 1950s (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2007; Yukl, 2012). The behavioural leadership studies conducted can be divided into two groups (Yukl, 2012). One group was concerned with how leaders manage their work. In particular, it investigated how leaders managed their time and documented the typical pattern of activities, responsibilities, and functions for managerial jobs, and how leaders dealt with conflicts, constraints, and requirements (Yukl, 2012). The other group attempted to identify effective leadership behaviour. The focus was on the correlation between leadership behaviour and indicators of leadership effectiveness, and on how effective leaders can differ from ineffective leaders (Yukl, 2012).

Some have argued that the leader behaviour studies failed to take account of such situational factors as different environments, different tasks, and different organisational structures, all of which can have an influence on leadership (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2007; Yukl, 2012). The focus was placed on scanning what leaders did most of the time rather than on trying to understand how contextual variables could cause a shift in behaviour (Vroom & Jago, 2007). 'Situational leadership theory' emerged as a reaction. It offered a new perspective, holding that no single leadership style, decision-making pattern, motivational strategy, or

organisational structure, is universally effective (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2007; Northouse, 2007, 2013; Wart, 2003; Yukl, 2012). It suggests that situations shape how leaders behave (Bass, 1999; Northouse, 2007, 2013; Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 2012). Therefore, an effective leader needs to understand the situation of the organisation and, in particular, the competence and skills of employees, as well as their commitment and motivation (Northouse, 2007, 2013). Having such an understanding, it is held, can enable a leader to identify the needs of the organisation and to adjust the leadership style to meet those needs.

'Situational leadership theory' has undergone several substantive changes since its inception in the late 1960s (Graeff, 1997; Northouse, 2007, 2013; Wart, 2003). One well-known variant was a model developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1977) and Blanchard (1985). Central to understanding this leadership model are the key concepts of directive behaviour (task) and supportive behaviour (relationship). Directive behaviour involves one-way communication and focuses on giving directions, instruction and guidance, developing goals and methods of evaluation, setting a timeline, defining duties and responsibilities and directing subordinates toward the attainment of goals (Northouse, 2007, 2013). Supportive behaviour involves a two-way or multidirectional communication between leaders and subordinates that can promote social and emotional support and eventually increase productivity (Northouse, 2007, 2013). Examples of such behaviour include active listening, asking for input, collaboration, use of praise, consultation, and other social and emotional support.

The directive and supportive behaviour, when combined, can be further classified into four main leadership approaches: directing (high task/low relationship), coaching (high task/high relationship), supporting (high relationship/low task) and delegating (low relationship/low task) (Northouse, 2007, 2013). These approaches, however, are not above criticism. Also, there is a lack of robust research findings to justify and support their theoretical underpinnings (Northouse, 2007, 2013). There is, for example, no clear explanation of how leaders transform the perceptions of their followers and how followers move from one level of development to another level (Northouse, 2007, 2013; Yukl, 2012). Further, the overall theory fails to address how demographic characteristics can

have an influence on subordinates' preferences for leadership. Another criticism relates to ambiguity of conceptualisation on the development level of subordinates (Northouse, 2007, 2013), and on how commitment and competence can be combined with four distinct levels of development (Graeff, 1997; Yukl, 1989).

At this point, it is apposite to recall that the diversity of leadership theories has also led to the emergence of diverse concepts. Some early definitions of leadership defined it as a focus on group processes (Bass, 1999). This suggests that the leader is at the centre, or focus, of group change and activity and embodies the collective will. Another group of definitions views leadership from a 'personality perspective'. Here, a leader is seen as a person who possesses unique traits and characteristics that enable him or her to induce others to complete a given task (Bass, 1999). Other theorists define leadership as the 'power relationship' that exists between leaders and subordinates (Bass, 1999; Northouse, 2007, 2013). This notion of leadership suggests that the leader is an individual in a position of authority, using power to make the change in others (Bass, 1999).

Despite the numerous definitions of leadership, most of them share a common element, namely, that it is a process of influence. Yukl (2012, p. 2) points out that "most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities in a group or organisation." Northouse (2007, 2013) also refers to leadership as a process through which an individual influences a group of individuals to accomplish a shared goal. These concepts of leadership consist of a number of elements, including process, influence, and a goal or vision.

Considering leadership as a 'process' suggests that it is not a trait or characteristic that inhabits the leader (Northouse, 2007, 2013). Rather, it is a transactional event that occurs between the leader and his or her subordinates. This means that leadership is not a one-way event. Rather, it is an interactive event in which the leader can have an influence on, and be influenced by, followers (Northouse, 2007, 2013). Also, the 'process' of influence is intended to achieve goals that are shared by the leader and followers. Therefore, leadership involves directing a group of individuals toward achieving a shared goal (Northouse, 2007, 2013).

Regarding 'influence', this relates to the person exercising influence and the type of influence exercised (Northouse, 2007, 2013; Yukl, 2012). It has a neutral stance because it does not indicate what purposes or actions should be sought (Bush, 2008; Bush & Glover, 2003). The 'influence' can come from different sources, including individual traits, leader behaviour, interaction patterns, role relationships, follower perceptions, and cognitive ability (Vroom & Jago, 2007; Yukl, 1989, 2012).

'Vision' also is increasingly being regarded as an essential element of leadership (Bush, 2008; Bush & Glover, 2003). This indicates that a main task of a leader is to set a goal or vision that is shared by a group of individuals and to direct them toward accomplishing that vision (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Northouse, 2007, 2013). It is, therefore, important that a leader articulates a clear and compelling vision, sets clear goals for the organisation and creates a sense of shared mission. On this, Yukl (2012) has stated that a vision is very important, especially during radical change, as it can provide a sense of continuity for followers by linking past events and present strategies to a vivid image of a better future for the organisation. It also offers hope for a better future and the faith that it will be attained.

## Leadership Theories in Education

The concepts of leadership presented above constitute a resource which scholars can draw upon when defining leadership in education. Adopting this position, Bush and Glover (2003) view school leadership as a process of influence directed towards the attainment of desired goals. This suggests that successful leadership involves constructing a clear vision based on firm professional and personal values (Bush, 2008; Bush & Glover, 2003). The vision needs to be well communicated and widely shared by teachers and other key stakeholders. Further, the leader needs to structure the school in alignment with the shared vision and direct the resources and activities of the school towards its attainment (Bush, 2008; Bush & Glover, 2003).

Some scholars have argued that the concept of leadership relates to that of management (Bush, 2008; Cuban, 1988; Yukl, 1989, 2012).

While acknowledging that management and leadership are not equivalent, Yukl (1989) suggested that the two constructs overlap. It is helpful at this point, therefore, to consider some of the differences and overlaps between these two concepts.

One view on the distinction between leadership and management relates to the assumption that they cannot occur in the same person (Yukl, 2012). This means that leaders and managers have incompatible values and different qualities. In this connection, Yukl (2012) distinguishes management from leadership as follows:

> Managers value stability, order, and efficiency, whereas leaders value flexibility, innovation, and adaptation. Managers are concerned about how things get done, and they try to get people to perform better. Leaders are concerned with what things mean to people, and try to get people to agree about the most important things to be done. (p. 5)

This view concurs with that of Bennis and Nanus (1985), who stated that to manage means to accomplish activities, while to lead means to influence others and create the vision for change. They emphasised that managers do things right and leaders do the right thing (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Other scholars differentiate leadership from management in terms of distinct processes (Bass, 1999; Cuban, 1988; Kotter, 1990; Rost, 1991). Rost (1991), for instance, viewed leadership as a multidirectional influence relationship and management as an authority relationship. Leadership, in this view, involves the process of developing mutual trust and purpose, leading to change in an organisation, whereas management is linked to coordinating activities to get the job done. This view is congruent with that of Kotter (1990), who distinguished leadership from management in terms of core processes and desired outcomes. He explained that the overall function of management relates to providing order and consistency in the organisation, while leadership is primarily concerned with producing organisational change and movement (Kotter, 1990).

The distinction between leadership and management is also made by Cuban (1988), who linked leadership with change and viewed management as a maintenance activity. He emphasised that leadership

involves influencing others to take action to accomplish intended outcomes. Leaders, in this view, set goals and motivate others to reach the goals (Cuban, 1988). Management, by contrast, is concerned with the effective and efficient maintenance of organisational arrangements. Cuban (1988) maintained that although good management often requires some leadership skills, the primary function is focused on maintenance rather than change. Bush and Glover (2003) offer a similar view, in which they link leadership to values and purpose, leading to change, and relate management to the implementation of policies and maintenance of school activities.

Although there are differences between leadership and management, the two do overlap in some ways. Kotter (1990), for example, pointed out that both leadership and management involve deciding what needs to be done, creating relationships to do it, and making sure it happens. Northouse (2007) indicates as follows that there is a great degree of overlap between leadership and management:

> When managers are involved in influencing a group to meet its goals, they are involved in leadership. When leaders are involved in planning, organising, staffing, and controlling, they are involved in management. Both processes involve influencing a group of individuals toward goal attainment. (p. 11)

Some scholars have also suggested that leadership and management need to be attributed equal importance if an organisation is to be successful (Bush & Glover, 2003; Kotter, 1990). On this, Kotter (1990) held that strong leadership without management can disrupt order and efficiency, and strong management without leadership can discourage risk-taking and innovation.

Finally, leadership has often been linked to effectiveness. Different scholars view leadership effectiveness differently, depending upon their perspective, the definition of effectiveness, and methodological preferences (Yukl, 1982, 2012). Many define leadership effectiveness in terms of the type of consequence or outcome produced by the leader for followers and other organisation stakeholders. These outcomes include "group performance, attainment of group objectives, group survival,

group preparedness, group capacity to deal with crises, subordinate satisfaction with the leader, subordinate commitment to group objective, the psychological well-being and personal growth of followers, and the leader's retention of his or her position of authority in the group" (Yukl, 1982, p. 2).

The concept of leadership effectiveness has been studied across organisational sectors and especially in schools in which leadership is considered vital for school effectiveness and improvement. In particular, education policy makers and researchers around the world have come to recognise that "schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their students and learners" (Bush, 2009, p. 375). It is, therefore, not surprising that a wide range of leadership models which attempt to explain leadership behaviours and practices associated with school effectiveness and improvement, has been constructed (Bush, 2008; O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010). These include 'transactional leadership'(Bass, 1999; Miller & Miller, 2001; O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2010)., 'transformational leadership' (Bass, 1999; Bush & Glover, 2003; Leithwood et al., 1998; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, 2006), 'instructional leadership' (Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996, 1998), 'managerial leadership (Bush, 2008; Bush & Glover, 2003, 2014), 'moral leadership' (Bush, 2008; Bush & Glover, 2003, 2014; Greenfield, 2004), 'distributed leadership' (Harris, 2013; Spillane, 2005), and 'contingent leadership' (Bush, 2008; Bush & Glover, 2003, 2012; Yukl, 2012), including others.

However, while the significant relationship between context and school leadership has been increasingly examined, there is still a lack of empirical research that can be used to develop a comprehensive theoretical framework to inform the field. In this regard, Vroom and Jago (2007) have indicated that while situational factors can influence leadership practice, the role of situational leadership has been largely ignored. This brings one to consider the situation of educational leadership in extraordinarily challenging circumstances, including both developing-country contexts and post-conflict contexts, where little research has been conducted aimed at understanding the nature and the context within which leaders at the individual school level work on a day-to-day basis (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013a).

## Educational Leadership in Developing Countries

A wide range of studies on educational leadership and management has been undertaken since the early part of the 21st century because of the recognition that school leadership can make a difference in learning achievement (Bush, 2008, 2012; Hallinger, 2011). Most of these studies have focused on Western, well-established, or relatively stable contexts (Bush, 2014; Dimmock & Walker, 1998; Hallinger, 2011; Harber & Davies, 1997; Nawab, 2011; Oplatka, 2004). However, little empirical research on educational leadership in developing-country contexts has been carried out. In this connection, Hallinger and Chen (2014), in the conclusion to their review of the empirical studies associated with educational leadership and management, stated that research in the field is particularly scarce for Asian countries. As a result, there is only a limited understanding of how educational leadership and management is practised within them.

The 'developing country contexts' refer to countries with minimal industrial and international market-based economic activity. In other words, they are "more agricultural-based, and they are usually characterised by high mortality rates, high birth rates, high levels of poverty and large gaps between rich and poor" (Oplatka, 2004, p. 428). Such countries are mainly situated in Africa, Latin America and Asia. At the same time, it is important to note that the structure of education systems in these areas can differ, depending on cultural, national and sociological contexts (Dimmock & Walker, 1998). Therefore, the results of a study in one developing country do not necessarily apply to another developing country (Oplatka, 2004).

The literature on school leadership in developing countries will now be examined. First, an overview of the broad education landscape in developing countries, with a particular focus on education issues which can shape school leadership and management is presented. Attention then shifts to examining school leadership preparation, development and support in those contexts. The section concludes with a review of the characteristics of school leadership and management identified in regard to developing nations.

## An Overview of the Education Landscape in Developing Countries

There has been tremendous progress in education attainment in many developing countries since the 1960s (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006), but it has not been evenly distributed geographically. In 2003, there were still more than 113 million children of primary school age not attending school (UNDP, 2003), 94 percent of whom lived in developing countries (UNESCO, 2002). More recently, repetition and school dropout rates in developing countries have been high, and the quality of education has often been low (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006; UNESCO, 2015). Many students learn much less than expected and teachers are often absent from classrooms. An overview of the related education landscape in developing countries, with special attention to access to education, problems of education quality, and matters to do with economic and educational resources in developing countries, is now presented.

### Access to Education

By 2006, school enrolment rates and adult literacy had increased significantly in many developing countries (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006). In particular, there had been impressive progress towards the provision of universal primary school education and in secondary school enrolments since the implementation of the *Dakar Framework for Action (DFA), Education for All (EFA)*, which resulted from the deliberations of the *World Economic Forum (WEF)* in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000. This progress was reflected in the results published in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, which showed that more children were attending school, compared to 1999 when there were 204 million out-of-school children (UNESCO, 2015).

Gross enrolment refers to the number of children enrolled in a particular level of education regardless of age, divided by the population of the age group that officially corresponds to the same level (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006). For instance, the primary school age range is usually defined as being between 6 and 11 years of age. Research has shown that gross

enrolment rates at the primary school level internationally have increased significantly over the last decades. In 1960, the gross enrolment rate at the primary school level was 65 percent in low-income countries, 83 percent in middle-income countries, and over 100 percent in high-income countries (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006).

A gross enrolment rate over 100 percent does not mean that all school-age children attend school. On this, Glewwe and Kremer (2006) explain that grade repetition increases gross enrolment rates. Secondly, gross enrolment rates are usually computed by comparing census data with Ministry of Education data obtained from reports of school principals (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006). Also, data in school principals' reports can be exaggerated.

Another way to measure progress toward universal primary education is to calculate net enrolment. This refers to the number of children enrolled in a particular level of education who belong to the age group that officially corresponds to that level, divided by the total population of the same age group (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006). In 1999, net primary school enrolment rates around the world were 80 percent in low-income countries and 88 percent in middle-income countries (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006; UNESCO, 2015). The low net enrolment rates mirror high repetition and late school-starting age. However, there has been significant progress in net enrolment at primary schools since 1999, reaching 90 percent in 2010 in many regions, and it was estimated that it would reach 93 percent in 2015 (UNESCO, 2015).

Enrolment rates at the secondary school level increased considerably in developing countries after 1960. The gross enrolment rate in low- and middle-income countries increased by almost 150 percent between 1960 and 1980, but progress slowed down to 59 percent in low-income countries and to 51 percent in middle-income countries from 1980 to 2000 (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006). The gross enrolment rate at the lower secondary education level increased from 71 percent in 1999, to 85 percent in 2012, and from 45 percent to 62 percent at upper secondary education (UNESCO, 2015). This progress, however, has varied substantially across regions. For example, although the gross enrolment rate at the lower secondary school level exceeded 95 percent in most regions in 2012, it was 89 percent in many Arab States, 81 percent in South and West Asia, and 50 percent in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2015).

While increases in enrolment are evident, millions of primary school-age children do not attend school and do not complete primary school education. There were approximately 58 million children of primary school age not in school globally in 2012, and at least half of these children lived in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2015). Student attriion also remains a daunting issue in many developing countries, where one in six children does not complete primary school education. The situation is critical in sub-Saharan Africa, where at least, 20 percent of children enrolled in school do not reach the final primary school grade (UNESCO, 2015). Rates of secondary school completion are even lower. This is attributed primarily to demographic pressures, conflict situations, poverty, child labour exploitation, traditional and religious beliefs, a shortage of teachers, and a lack of adequate commitment by governments (Harber & Davies, 1997; UNESCO, 2015).

## Quality of Education

Some developing countries have made significant progress in both the expansion of education services and in improvement in learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2015). For example, Kenya raised the completion rate in primary school education from 42 percent in 2000 to 62 percent in 2007, and gained an increase in the percentage of those reaching the minimum-set standard in mathematics from 25 percent to 39 percent (UNESCO, 2015). A similar situation took place in Ghana, where access to education and equitable learning went hand in hand. Here, the secondary school net enrolment ratio increased from 36 percent in 2003 to 46 percent in 2009, and learning disparity has been narrowed across regions (UNESCO, 2015).

Nevertheless, the quality of education in many developing countries is very low (Glewwe, 2014; Glewwe & Kremer, 2006). Students in such countries often learn much less than what is indicated in the official school curriculum. Also, they learn much less than their counterparts in developed countries. This was indicated in an international comparison undertaken in 2009, which demonstrated that 58.1 percent of U.S. 15-year-old students achieved a literacy score of Level 3, which refers to

the ability to read tasks of moderate complexity, whereas the corresponding figures for 15-year-old students in many developing countries was much lower: 23.3 percent for Brazil, 12.2 percent for Indonesia, 20.1 percent for Jordan, and 13.1 percent for Peru (Glewwe, 2014). A larger gap was found in relation to mathematics, where Level 3 refers to the ability to execute clearly described procedures, including those that involve sequential decisions. The results were 52.2 percent for the United States, 11.9 percent for Brazil, 6.4 percent for Indonesia, 11.9 percent for Jordan, and 9.5 percent for Peru (Glewwe, 2014).

Glewwe and Kremer (2006) state that mathematics score disparities between developing and developed countries are approximately equivalent to a three-year education gap. This gap reflects the low quality of achievement in developing countries, and is deemed to result from the rapid expansion of education services, in particular at primary and secondary school level. The situation has constrained the use of financial and human resources to improve the process of education (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006).

## Economic Resources and Education Systems

Developing countries are characterised by fragility, while being shaped by global economic changes (Bush, 2008). These factors can also have an impact on government expenditure on education. Glewwe (2014) points out that while increasing expenditure on education can lead to increased enrolment and learning, most developing countries experience financial constraints which make it difficult for them to allocate larger amounts in their budgets to education. Expenditure per primary school student in low-income countries was about 7 percent of per capita GDP in the late 1990s (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006). Little has changed since then (UNESCO, 2015).

Teachers' salaries account for a large percentage of government investment in education in developing countries. In many of them, it makes up at least 74 percent of government expenditure on education (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006; Rogers & Vegas, 2010). Sometimes, the figure can be higher than 80 percent of the recurrent education budget, occasionally

even reaching 95 percent (Rogers & Vegas, 2010; UNESCO, 2015). Glewwe and Kremer (2006) have explained that this is because these countries pay high teacher salaries relative to GDP per capita. Also, while recognising that there has been a decline in the student/teacher ratio in some countries, the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015 reported that the ratio remains high in others, often exceeding 40:1 (UNESCO, 2015).

Some low-income countries have increased the percentage of trained teachers in the classrooms in the last decade, but others have not. In 2012, the ratio of students to trained teachers exceeded 100:1 in some African countries, including the Central African Republic, Chad, Guinea-Bissau and South Sudan (UNESCO, 2015). It was estimated that between 2012 and 2015, around 4 million primary school teachers would have been needed to address the scarcity of teachers involved in primary school education and to achieve universal primary education (UNESCO, 2015). This means that around 450,000 additional teachers are required each year across the developing world, with some regions needing many more teachers than others.

Many developing countries spend more on tertiary education than on secondary and primary school education. On this, Glewwe and Kremer (2006) stated that "on average, governments in low-income countries spend 34 times more on a student in tertiary education than they spend on a student in primary education and 14 times more than on a student in secondary education" (p. 962). Low spending on primary and secondary school education has two major implications for school-level stakeholders. First, it can constrain the ability of school principals to expand school facilities and teaching and learning materials, along with the number of teachers to teach disadvantaged groups and to provide quality education. Secondly, low spending on education means that households often have to take responsibility for the costs involved. While school fees have been abolished in some developing countries, parents are responsible for providing many basic learning materials, including textbooks, uniforms, transportation, and school facilities (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006).

Education systems in developing countries tend to be highly centralised (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006; Oplatka, 2004). The ministry of education in many developing countries decides on most aspects of education,

often including a central national curriculum, syllabus, teaching and learning materials, recruiting and deploying staff, and allocating the school budget (Oplatka, 2004). In this regard, Mitchell (2015) points out that while school principals in Ethiopia are expected to lead school improvement, they lack autonomy in relation to budget management, procurement of textbooks, and recruitment and training of teachers. Glewwe and Kremer (2006) have also commented that most developing countries have a single centrally-set curriculum which frequently tends to favour the needs of relatively elite students and ignores the larger population. This can result in poor academic performance in many students' tests, along with high dropout and repetition rates. Also, centralised education systems can limit the autonomy of school leaders and create a narrow definition of their roles (Oplatka, 2004).

## School Leadership Preparation and Development in Developing Countries

High quality leadership is important for school improvement and student learning (Asuga, Eacott & Scevak, 2015; Bush, 2008; Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood et al., 1998). Also, providing leadership differs from being able to teach (Bush, 2008, 2011). However, school leaders in many developing countries lack formal leadership preparation and development when they progress from being classroom teachers to becoming school principals (Bush, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2013; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Bysik et al., 2015; Kitavi & van der Westhuizen, 1997; Niqab, Sharma, Wei, & Maulod, 2014; Okoko, Scott, & Scott, 2015; Onguko, Abdalla, & Webber, 2012; Oplatka, 2004). Usually, they are not required to attend any formal, pre-service leadership and management training.

School leadership appointments in many developing countries are based on a traditional apprenticeship model, which means that one has to learn one's job 'on the job' (Okoko et al., 2015; Onguko et al., 2012; Su, Adams, & Mininberg, 2000). Principals are often appointed on the basis of having a successful teaching record and a substantial length of teaching experience, rather than on having demonstrated leadership

capacity (Bush, 2008; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Gamage & Sooksomchitra, 2004; Niqab et al., 2014; Onguko et al., 2012; Oplatka, 2004; Kitavi & van der Westhuizen, 1997). This means that school leaders move from being classroom teachers to master teachers, to school administrators, and to school principals, with little or no specialist training for their new roles in each case (Bush, 2009; Donkor, 2015; Gamage & Sooksomchitra, 2004; Kitavi & van der Westhuizen, 1997; Niqab et al., 2014; Okoko et al., 2015; Su, Gamage, & Mininberg, 2003). Okoko et al. (2015) point out that in Kenya, teachers have to work for at least 20 years before they qualify to become principals. They spend at least ten years as classroom teachers, three years as senior teachers and heads of departments, and three years as deputy principals. Furthermore, in some countries, political connections and nepotism can be influential in the appointment of new school leaders, even when they lack appropriate qualifications and experiences (Donkor, 2015; Okoko et al., 2015; Onguko et al., 2012; Oplatka, 2004; Sumintono, Sheyoputri, Jiang, Misbach, & Jumintono, 2015).

School leadership positions in many developing countries tend to be male-dominated (Bush, 2008; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Niqab et al., 2014). Herriot et al. (2002) reported that 93 percent of primary school principals in Kenya in 2002 were males. Bush and Heystek (2006) found that male school principals made up 66 percent of the school principal population in the Gauteng province of South Africa in 2006. A similar situation was found in Pakistan, regarding which Niqab et al. (2014) reported that school leadership positions are largely occupied by males. This situation is mainly attributed to cultural factors (Bush, 2008; Bush & Oduro, 2006). In particular, women are often deemed to be inferior to men and are discouraged from taking up leadership positions.

There is wide recognition that school leaders need specific preparation if they are to be successful in leading and managing schools (Bush, 2009; Gamage & Sooksomchitra, 2004). Bush (2008) offers four main reasons why preparation is vital for school leaders. These are "the expansion of the role of school principal, the increasing complexity of school contexts, recognition that preparation is a moral obligation, and recognition that effective preparation and development make a difference" (Bush, 2008, p. 26). School leaders in developing countries often, however, have few

professional development opportunities following their appointment (Bush, 2008; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Donkor, 2015; Niqab et al., 2014; Okoko et al., 2015). Those professional development opportunities provided as part of the induction for newly appointed school leaders are often inadequate. For example, Tekleselassie (2002) reported in 2002, that most school principals in Ethiopia attended in-service school management training sessions, but they were perceived to be limited, ill-managed, irrelevant and repetitive, with incompetent trainers. Also, there can be a lack of capacity among those responsible for designing and delivering the training and supporting of the school leaders (Bush, 2008; Kitavi & van der Westhuizen, 1997; Tekleselassie, 2002).

The dearth of professional development opportunities can leave school principals, and especially newly appointed ones, unprepared for their responsibilities (Bush, 2008; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Onguko et al., 2012). Beginning school principals in Kenya, for example, face multiple challenges in dealing with their job. These include shortage of school facilities, students being unable to pay school fees and to buy learning materials, poor school sanitation facilities, managing staff, deciding on the language of instruction, overseeing community relations, organising professional development, and engaging in crisis management (Kitavi & van der Westhuizen, 1997; Okoko et al., 2015). Onguko, et al. (2012) also reported that school principals in Tanzania, owing to the lack of professional preparation and development, work in extraordinarily challenging situations where they have to deal with many problems, including shortages of teachers, limited availability of teaching and learning materials, low parental awareness of the importance of education, community relations' challenges, health issues, orphanage placements, and child labour.

Researchers have called for proper recruitment, preparation, development and support for school leaders in developing countries if the aim of education is to enable these countries to compete in an increasingly challenging world economy (Bush, 2008; Bush & Oduro, 2006). In 2004, Gamage and Sooksomchitra (2004) indicated that Thai school leaders required new skills, competencies and professional development to deal with challenges faced as a result of school-based management reforms. They (Gamage & Sooksomchitra, 2004) suggested that leadership and

management training should have both theoretical and practical aspects, enabling school leaders to become effective in their jobs. Drawing on insights from different countries, Bush (2008) proposed that school leadership and management training should have five core elements: instructional leadership, law, finance, human resource management, and administration.

## Characteristics of School Leaders in Developing Countries

School leaders in developing countries work under challenging circumstances with little or no preparation, development and support from their governments. Challenges often include lack of economic and education resources, student dropout, low quality learning, and a shortage of qualified teachers. However, little research has been undertaken aimed at generating an understanding of leadership practices adopted in such circumstances. Oplatka (2004), back in 2004, identified three main characteristics in the approaches that school leaders adopt in developing countries. These are a focus on management and maintenance, a lack of change initiation, and an absence of instructional leadership.

The first characteristic of leadership and management that has been associated with school leaders in developing countries is that they often prioritise management and maintenance over leadership. They spend a considerable amount of time maintaining staff and student discipline, dealing with untrained staff, managing school finance and resources, arranging transportation and routine maintenance work, scheduling school activities and tasks, and dealing with the community and parents of students (Chapman & Burchfield, 1994; Harber & Dadey, 1993; Onguko et al., 2012). Okoko et al. (2015) reported that school principals in Kenya were responsible for such managerial duties as coordinating examinations, managing school finance, managing student misbehaviour, scheduling timetable, working with parents, and managing the school curriculum. Okoko et al. (2015) went on to say, however, that principals were often absent from school, leaving the day-to-day management to their deputy principals. As a result, they devoted very little time to devising long-term school development plans.

We have known for quite some time that many school principals in low-income countries also have to perform very basic managerial tasks (Oplatka, 2004). These can include dealing with kitchen-related issues, fixing school roofs, and mending water pipes (Harber & Dadey, 1993). Further, they often engage in fund-raising activities. Because of a lack of funding support provided by government, they are regularly unable to cover the cost of basic school needs, including those associated with telephone services, clean water, and physical school facilities. For instance, principals in Botswana, China, Ghana, Kenya and South Africa have often engaged school stakeholders, parents and community members in contributing labour, materials and funds (Harber & Dadey, 1993; Kitavi & van der Westhuizen, 1997; Oplatka, 2004).

Another characteristic of leadership and management linked with school leaders in developing countries is their reluctance to engage in change initiation. While school leaders in Western countries often play a role as innovators and initiators of school change, school leaders in many developing countries often lack the capacity and motivation to initiate and lead school reform (Oplatka, 2004). This situation can be attributed to some extent to the bureaucratic regulations and organisational structures which present limited opportunities for school leaders and restrict their capacity to participate in change initiation and management (Bush, 2008; Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000; Oplatka, 2004).

Cultural features also play an important role in constraining the ability of school leaders in developing countries to participate in the initiation of education change (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000; Oplatka, 2004). What is often promoted is a proliferation of laws and rules, along with safety and security measures. This can discourage the pursuit of difference and novelty. School principals in Thailand, for example, were reported to have favoured stability and to find change disruptive (Hallinger & Kantamara, 2000). Also, in Thai culture, senior leaders or policy makers are perceived to have personal power which can influence the direction of education change. In addition, Oplatka (2004) has observed that while a number of education change initiatives, including education decentralisation and school-based management, have been introduced in education systems in developing countries, the roles of school leaders have changed little. On this, Bush (2008) has stated that school leaders in such coun-

tries tend to practise a managerial style of leadership because their primary role is to implement externally imposed policies.

A third characteristic of school leadership and management in many developing countries which has been identified is the absence of instructional leadership. Although instructional leadership has increased in popularity in the last few decades (Bush, 2015; Hallinger, 2005), it has rarely been adopted by school leaders in developing countries (Oplatka, 2004). Rather, school leaders in many of these countries tend to adopt a stance where they concentrate mainly on management and maintenance.

## Educational Leadership in Post-conflict Countries

While many post-conflict countries are situated in developing countries, they often also have unique characteristics. This section of the chapter provides an overview of educational leadership and management in such settings. It starts with an overview of the education contexts in post-conflict countries which can have an impact on the practice of leadership and management at the school level. These include the legacies of conflict on an education system and approaches to education reconstruction in post-conflict contexts. It then moves on to examine school leadership situations in different post-conflict environments.

### The Impacts of Conflict on Education Systems in Post-conflict Contexts

The education landscape in post-conflict contexts can be complex. Thus, it requires critical analysis before any education reform initiatives can be developed and implemented. In this connection, the World Bank (2005) explained that post-conflict contexts can provide both opportunities and challenges for education reconstruction and transformation. The opportunities can include replacement of new political systems supportive of reconstruction, a sense of high expectation for change and renewal in education, weakened bureaucratic systems, and available resources for

education reconstruction (World Bank, 2005). These can also turn into challenges for the reconstruction of education in post-conflict situations. Such challenges can include a lack of political direction and leadership due to the new political authorities being weak and unstable (Buckland, 2006; World Bank, 2005). Also, there is often a lack of effective administration. This can obstruct the implementation of education reforms. Further, within post-conflict societies the civil society may be disorganised and focused more on oppositional politics than on policy development (Buckland, 2006; World Bank, 2005). Another challenge relates to the unpredictability and constraint of financial flows.

Substantially destructive effects of conflict can also impose significant burdens on education reconstruction within post-conflict contexts. A number of related challenges relate to insufficient domestic revenue to operate the education system, a severe shortage of qualified teachers, an oversupply of under-qualified teachers, a lack of skills training for youth, poor record keeping, a high rate of illiteracy, corruption, and a lack of accountability and transparency in educational management (Buckland, 2006; O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; World Bank, 2005).

To illustrate the long-term legacy of conflict on education reconstruction, O'Malley (2010) identified five broad outcomes. First, teachers and education personnel are often murdered or flee overseas during armed conflict because of their connection with a state authority. This situation eventuated in many conflict-affected countries, including Burundi, Cambodia, Columbia, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sudan and Thailand (O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). These circumstances can not only impede education provision during conflict, but can also impose a considerable impediment on education reconstruction (Buckland, 2006; O'Malley, 2010; Smith, 2009, 2010; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005) through both a shortage of trained teachers and an oversupply of under-qualified or unqualified teachers (Buckland, 2006; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). Further, those teachers remaining can often experience psychological trauma and may also lack motivation in teaching.

Another long-term effect of conflict on education reconstruction in post-conflict settings relates to students and their learning (Buckland, 2006; O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; Smith, 2010; UNESCO, 2011;

World Bank, 2005). Student enrolment and attendance rates are frequently low during times of conflict as a result of violent attacks and closure of schools. Moreover, the situation does not tend to improve much in the post-conflict environment. The immediate return of children to education after conflict is often not seen as being important by many parents because of the destruction of school facilities, shortage of teachers, and damage to industries, markets and other infrastructure (Justino, 2014; World Bank, 2005). Furthermore, students in such contexts may be traumatised as a result of psychological and physical abuse (O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005).

Post-conflict nations also regularly confront a lack of education infrastructure to accommodate education recovery (Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; World Bank, 2005). While some schools may be open, others often require substantial rehabilitation or reconstruction, which can take years to accomplish. In this regard, O'Malley (2010) has indicated that in Sierra Leone education infrastructure was largely destroyed during its years of conflict, and 60 percent of primary schools and 40 percent of secondary schools needed major reconstruction three years after the conflict ended. Additionally, many schools in post-conflict contexts may lack basic classroom facilities and such resources as desks, chairs, textbooks, chalk, and blackboards, and there can often also be a shortage of proper toilets, clean water and electricity (O'Malley, 2010).

A further complication is that education systems in post-conflict contexts tend to be highly centralised and may lack transparency (O'Malley, 2010; World Bank, 2005). This situation can be attributed to a shortage of technical expertise and capacity to implement education reforms because of the lack of teachers and of education officials (Brown, 2011; Buckland, 2006; Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; World Bank, 2005). Furthermore, education records and information systems are often poorly managed because of the destruction of government institutions, including teacher training colleges (O'Malley, 2010; World Bank, 2005). As a result, education reconstruction can lead to grievances emerging over perceived inequality in the provision of resources (Smith, 2010).

The situation may be compounded because people in post-conflict contexts can suffer a great deal from symbolic effects. This refers to psychological effects of and social experiences as a result of violent attacks (O'Malley, 2010). These violent attacks can result in high levels of fear

and anxiety for students during the course of conflict, which can have a negative impact on learning (O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; World Bank, 2005). Teachers and education officials may also experience negative psychological effects as a result of loss of relatives, colleagues and students during conflict. This situation can, in turn, affect the way teaching is conducted (O'Malley, 2010).

## Approaches to Education Reconstruction in Post-conflict Contexts

Given the pervasive impact of conflict, education systems need to be resilient and incorporate policies and strategies that address broad social reconstruction and transformation initiatives, from building peace and social cohesion, to facilitating economic recovery and getting the country on to an accelerated development path (Justino, 2014; Smith, 2010; Weinstein, Freedman, & Hughson, 2007; World Bank, 2005). To this end, the World Bank (2005) provided a framework for approaching the reconstruction of education in such challenging situations. The framework emphasises the undertaking of the following:

- Sound policies and committed leadership at the country level, supported by appropriate expenditure frameworks, effective budget execution, and good governance;
- Adequate operational capacity at all levels, including capacity of communities to participate effectively, and the right incentives so that countries can translate sound policies and strong leadership into effective action;
- Financial resources to scale up programmes that work and measures to ensure that these reach the services delivery level;
- Relentless focus on results and accountability for learning and outcomes, so that policies and programmes are built on the bases of empirical evidence of problems and solutions that work. (World Bank, 2005, p. 30)

If successfully addressed, these could help post-conflict countries to achieve a rapid expansion of education provision and, in particular, primary school education.

Studies also point to specific areas of education policy and practice in post-conflict contexts that require special attention. One area is that of physical reconstruction. This refers to such matters as the construction of education facilities, engaging in emergency repair strategies, providing for needs associated with refugee education, and solving issues to do with landmine safety (Arnhold, Bekker, Kersh, McLeish, & Phillips, 1996; Justino, 2014; O'Malley, 2010; Smith, 2010; World Bank, 2005). Reconstruction could provide a sense of normalcy and encourage children and teachers to return to school. Also, good governance of education systems could provide an important pathway to achieving equity, inclusion and social cohesion (Smith, 2010; World Bank, 2005). It should include encouraging responsible control of education systems, adopting transparent practices for funding, procurement and employment, and promoting accountability and ownership (Smith, 2010; World Bank, 2005).

Another area of post-conflict education reconstruction is concerned with identity factors important for understanding conflict (Arnhold et al., 1996; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005; Smith, 2010). Given that education can generate conflict, special consideration should be given to aspects of education that are closely linked to identity formation. In particular, four aspects warrant attention. These are separate schooling, language policies, faith-based education, and civic and citizenship education (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005; Smith, 2005). If successfully developed and implemented, these aspects of education could promote positive values of tolerance and respect for diversity, inclusiveness, and peace building.

A further area of education reconstruction that requires special attention relates to the curriculum (Arnhold et al., 1996; O'Malley, 2010; Smith, 2010; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). This can require strong and clear political leadership, authentic consultation and considerable technical expertise (World Bank, 2005). Therefore, comprehensive training is critical for relevant education stakeholders, including teachers. The focus should be on learning activities, teaching approaches, and resources. On this, Smith (2010) indicated that education reform frequently pays particular attention to three factors, namely modernising the curriculum, replacing existing textbooks, and improving the quality

of teaching through improved teaching approaches and investment in teacher education. In addition, the curriculum should promote the teaching of history and the role of peace education and democracy, and address issues associated with loss of morale and confidence, as well as those associated with depression and trauma (Brown, 2011; Smith, 2005; UNESCO, 2011; Weinstein et al., 2007; World Bank, 2005). Some researchers also suggest that the area should be combined with identity reconstruction in the curriculum (Weinstein et al., 2007).

Yet another area of reconstruction in post-conflict education that warrants careful attention is concerned with teachers and teacher education. Teachers play a most important role in education reconstruction and especially in determining the quality of learning (Smith, 2010; World Bank, 2005). In particular, they can have an impact on values and thus make a significant contribution to constructing social identity. Therefore, education reconstruction should strive to promote the status of teaching within society by addressing issues relating to qualifications, teacher preparation and development, rates of pay, and terms and conditions of employment (Smith, 2010; World Bank, 2005). It should also focus on issues associated with diversity-sensitive recruitment and deployment by ensuring there is adequate recruitment of male and female teachers from different ethnic groups, where relevant, and an adequate supply of teachers (O'Malley, 2010; Smith, 2010; World Bank, 2005).

Notwithstanding the great efforts shown by post-conflict governments and the international community in reconstructing education, some researchers have argued that education reconstruction in post-conflict settings can lack sensitivity to local issues when education proposals are being introduced (O'Malley, 2010; Weinstein et al., 2007). The needs and voices of the most affected groups, including children, parents, teachers and school leaders, are often not sufficiently reflected in associated education development plans (Weinstein et al., 2007). The content of the curriculum and the teaching approaches proposed may not, as a result, address the practical concerns of key stakeholders. In this connection, it has been concluded that the absence of stakeholder representation at meetings on important policy initiatives can be a factor contributing to a failure to achieve Education for All (EFA) (World Bank, 2005).

The reconstruction of education in post-conflict societies is also often more informed by theoretical assumptions than by rigorous research-based evidence (Paulson & Rappleye, 2007; Tomlinson & Benefield, 2005). This can mean that those paying attention to theoretical positions do not consider the situation where education projects are being executed. Also, those paying attention to practical insights often ignore the theoretical positions which could provide guidance in the formation and execution of education reconstruction. Therefore, more critically-informed and policy-relevant research in this emerging area of inquiry is desirable (Davies, 2005; Novelli & Lopes Cardozo, 2008; Paulson, 2011; Paulson & Rappleye, 2007).

The literature further indicates that priority is often given to the reconstruction of basic education over other levels of education (Buckland, 2006; World Bank, 2005). This raises concern about the need to ensure balanced development of education systems by equally supporting the reconstruction of secondary school education, and technical, vocational and adult education (World Bank, 2005). There is sometimes also a lack of opportunity for children and youth whose education was interrupted during conflict to return to school (Justino, 2014; World Bank, 2005). This calls for an expansion of education beyond basic formal education. Accordingly, those influencing education reconstruction could advocate for the implementation of non-formal education to provide social training programmes and life skills' training for youth so that they can participate in economic activities (Justino, 2014).

## Portrait of School Leadership in Post-conflict Contexts

School leaders in post-conflict contexts work under extraordinarily challenging circumstances in their day-to-day work. Clarke and O'Donoghue (2013b) have focused on three main learning agendas in seeking to portray the complexities and challenges involved. These are 'organisational learning', 'teacher learning' and 'student learning'. Each of these areas is now considered.

## Organisational Learning

A number of factors have influenced the way in which leaders at the individual school level in post-conflict contexts operate their organisational learning agenda. The first relates to the external environment. Clarke and O'Donoghue (2013b) indicate that school leaders tend to exercise their leadership within the parameters of the broad education system. This determines what they can do within their schools to deal with the turbulent circumstances that characterise post-conflict contexts. Some studies illustrate that school leaders in post-conflict countries have limited discretion and inclination to lead and manage their schools. Maebuta (2013), for example, reports that school leaders in the Solomon Islands work in a dysfunctional education system which constrains their ability to deal with challenges resulting from ethnic conflict in the country.

Davies (2013) illustrates how school leaders in Angola have struggled to promote the capacity of their schools and communities in an education system which has been influenced by political and economic inequality and a widespread culture of corruption. She points especially to the corruption involved in the use of oil and other resources, by the government and to political tensions around this that have developed over many years, all of which have a negative influence on the education system in the country. Datoo and Johnson (2013) explored the complexity of school leadership following the post-2007 election violence in Kenya, which changed the way in which education in the country operates. School leaders had to face a wide range of challenges, including the displacement of students and teachers, a need for trained counsellors, and very limited resources.

Another factor that can constrain the exercise of leadership at the individual school level in post-conflict contexts is the school-specific situation. The challenge here is with "providing the appropriate conditions and opportunities for bringing to fruition the hidden capital of everyone associated with the organisation" (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013b, p. 194). There is also the importance of school culture, which can either promote or impede school improvement plans. Datoo and Johnson (2013), for instance, indicate that school leaders in Kenya have striven to

challenge cultural issues concerning ethnic tension, fear, aggression, and prejudice. This situation is similar to that in the Solomon Islands. In this context, Maebuta (2013) has reported that school leaders in multi-ethnic schools fear the return of ethnic violence and thus community gatherings are avoided. Such a situation can have a very negative impact on schooling, resulting in low and uneven access to education, high levels of student dropout, and low levels of learning achievement (Maebuta, 2013).

Lack of basic physical infrastructure can also limit the capacity of school leaders in post-conflict contexts to create a productive organisational learning agenda (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013b). For example, Beck and Araujo (2013) indicate that schools in Timor-Leste largely depend on outside agencies for the provision of all their needs, ranging from buildings to basic classroom materials and facilities, including desks, chairs, blackboards, and chalk. These authors emphasised that school leaders are challenged by "inadequate sanitation, lack of basic furniture, poor playing areas and an absence of technological resources that would help them to provide a more holistic education for their students" (Beck & Araujo, 2013, p. 171). A similar situation is found in Sri Lanka, a post-conflict, as well as a post-tsunami nation. Here, as Earnest (2013) has reported, school buildings are not equipped with such basic resources as water, latrines and sanitation facilities. In the case of post-conflict Lebanon, Maadad (2013) has noted that school leaders work in very challenging circumstances, as evidenced by a lack of basic classroom facilities, including desks, chairs, and blackboards.

## Teacher Learning

The organisational learning agenda can shape the development of the professional and intellectual capacities of teachers. On this, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2013b) note that discussion on teacher learning in post-conflict contexts needs to be conducted by considering both the macro-level of the education system and the micro-level of the school. As stated already, education systems in post-conflict settings can experience a shortage of trained teachers and an oversupply of under-qualified teachers who often experience psychological trauma as a result of conflict

(Buckland, 2006; Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013b; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). Further, they may work under such challenging circumstances as a lack of proper physical buildings, classrooms, classroom resources, electricity, drinking water, internet, and basic amenities (MacBeath & Swaffield, 2013). The situation is often exacerbated by the low level of salaries, leaving some teachers with no option but to seek a second source of income.

School leaders can also play a crucial role in creating an environment that is conducive to the professional and intellectual development of teachers. While recognising the importance of teacher professionalism in the provision of quality education in Angola, Davies (2013) points out that school leaders in this context have struggled to promote an understanding of the importance of professionalism among teachers and to keep them motivated. She highlights that efforts have been constrained by such teacher-related factors as high absenteeism, sexual harassment, drunkenness, corruption, and the long distances between teachers' homes and their schools (Davies, 2013). Maadad (2013) also offered an insight into teacher professionalism in Lebanon, stating that school leaders in this context have struggled to provide support for teachers who have difficulties in adopting the learner-centred approaches recommended in the school curriculum. On post-conflict Timor-Leste, Beck and Araujo (2013) have indicated that teachers are often absent from school and tend largely to teach their students using exclusively teacher-centred approaches.

## Student Learning

Students' learning in post-conflict contexts can be constrained as a result of their experience of trauma associated with psychological and physical abuse during conflict (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013b; O'Malley, 2010; Seitz, 2004; UNESCO, 2011; World Bank, 2005). Maadad (2013), for example, has explained as follows how war in Lebanon left many people, and especially students, psychologically traumatised:

> An entire society still lives in denial. Some do not talk about what happened, some are afraid to return to their villages and original homes and

> some are disabled physically and scared. Others are still grieving the loss of family members, friends and neighbours, and others yet again are refusing to even step outside of their homes. (p. 134)

This observation concurs with that of Earnest (2013), who reported that the impact of conflict and a tsunami in Sri Lanka placed many students in difficult situations, including displacement, loss of family, physical abuses, exploitation and violence. She also highlighted the difficulty that school leaders can face in reintegrating former child soldiers into the schooling system.

While many students in post-conflict contexts have suffered from psychological trauma, little psychological support has been available for them to deal with it. On this, Maadad (2013) indicated that many learners and teachers in Lebanon who were traumatised did not receive any counselling. Similarly, Datoo and Johnson (2013) have reported that some school principals in Kenya were not even able to recognise the psychological effects of conflict on students and teachers. The lack of such awareness, compounded by a shortage of resources and support from relevant authorities, can result in associated issues being unresolved. This situation, in turn, can contribute to generating a hostile learning environment that may encourage violence, misbehaviour, and humiliation.

## Educational Leadership in Post-conflict Cambodia

A considerable number of empirical studies have focused on education in post-conflict Cambodia. In regard to this body of work, Ayres (1999, 2003) has provided insightful commentary, with a specific emphasis on the crisis of education in the country. In particular, he examined the disparity between the education system and the economic, political, and cultural contexts. Clayton (2002) examined foreign language policy in the country, explaining the widespread use of the English language in Cambodia, alongside French efforts to counteract its spread in favour of French. Dy and Ninomiya (2003) reviewed education policies and strate-

gies to explain the progress and challenges of basic education development and change in Cambodia in the 1990s.

Chhinh and Dy (2009) investigated the context of education change and associated processes at the basic education level in Cambodia. Their findings indicated that the government made significant progress, in providing physical infrastructure and access to education. However, they also indicated a lack of political will and commitment to allocate an adequate budget for education development, with the result that the quality of education suffered (Chhinh & Dy, 2009). Keng (2009) also reported on the failure of the government to take seriously the official comprehensive education change-agenda in order to improve the quality of education. Further, while acknowledging the efforts of government to implement the three education priorities, namely, ensuring equitable access to education, increasing the quality and efficiency of education, and promoting institutional development and capacity building for decentralisation, Tan (2007) reported a number of barriers related to low enrolment, high dropout rates, and high repetition rates. These include the high cost of schooling, unofficial school fees, lack of transparency, and lack of accountability.

Very few empirical studies with a specific focus on educational leadership in the post-conflict era, however, have been undertaken in Cambodia. Shoraku (2006) conducted a study aimed at generating an understanding of the impact that culture has had on education change in the public schools. Lim (2008) investigated the extent to which secondary school principals in Phnom Penh used instructional practices in their daily school operations. More recently, Long (2014) assessed the leadership development needs of school principals and deputy principals at the primary school level. The next chapter is one of the three chapters presented in relation to a major related study conducted by the current authors.

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# 4

# Historical Background and Recent Developments in Relation to Primary School Leadership in Cambodia

## Introduction

Political reform can lead to change in the rules and regulations that govern the provision of education. In particular, it can result in changes in education policies and practices, including in relation to educational administration, curriculum, teaching and learning. In this regard, the Cambodian education system has undergone a number of changes since the colonial era. Each political regime that came into power had its own ideology and associated strategies for leading the country. Little research, however, has been undertaken to provide an understanding of associated developments in relation to primary school leadership in the country.

This chapter goes some way towards addressing the latter matter. It is in two main parts. The first part addresses the first aim of the study being reported in this book, namely to generate an understanding of the historical background to primary school leadership in Cambodia from the colonial period until 1998. In this connection, it will be recalled that the current history of Cambodia has been characterised by colonialism, civil war, and poverty. Shortly after gaining independence from France in 1953, the country descended into political turmoil. Later, between 1975 and 1979, a


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brutal genocide took place, resulting in a considerable loss of human life, destruction of physical infrastructure, destruction of socio-cultural and economic structures, and extensive poverty. While the genocide ended in 1979, conflict was still active in some parts of the country until 1998.

The second part of this chapter addresses the second aim of the study being reported in this book, namely to generate an understanding of the developments that have taken place in relation to primary school leadership in Cambodia since 1998. It is divided into three sub-parts. The first sub-part provides an overview of broad education policies and plans that have shaped primary school education and primary school leadership and management. The second sub-part examines specific developments related to primary school education. The third sub-part investigates developments that took place relating to primary school leadership in Cambodia from the end of conflict in 1998 until 2015.

## Historical Background to Primary School Leadership

Contemporary developments in relation to primary school leadership in Cambodia can be partly understood through having an appreciation of its historical background. To that end, this section of the chapter now provides an overview of the historical background to primary school leadership in the country from colonial period until 1998. It is important to highlight at this juncture that historical sources in the area are not plentiful. Two major reasons stand out when attempting to explain this situation. The first relates to a lack of attention from scholars to research on education developments in the country since independence. Over 17 years ago, Ayres (2003) stated that, unlike its neighbours, Thailand and Vietnam, Cambodia's recent past had been largely neglected by researchers. This neglect has not been rectified greatly in the interim.

The second reason for the situation relates to the civil war that took place in the country. Many government documents, including policy papers and reports, were destroyed or damaged during the armed conflict and the associated genocide. Nevertheless, some material is still available and was drawn upon during the investigation on the study being reported.

The overall context is provided by the fact that Cambodia has experienced many political changes since the colonial era. These brought about changes in policies and practices in relation to primary school leadership and management in the country. It is, therefore, important that each of the seven political regimes is considered. They are the pre-colonial period (prior to 1863), the French protectorate and colonial period (1863–1953), the Sihanouk regime period (1953–1970), the Khmer Republic regime period (1970–1975), the Khmer Rouge Regime period (1975–1979), the People's Republic of Kampuchea regime period (1979–1989), and the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and coalition government period (1989–1998).

## The Pre-colonial Period (Prior to 1863)

Before the arrival of the French to Cambodia, a traditional form of education existed which was mainly focused on the teaching of religious and cultural principles (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Chandler, 2008; Clayton, 1995; Fergusson & Masson, 1997; Osborne, 1969). This education took place at 'wat' or pagoda schools, which provided only a primary level education (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Bit, 1991; Clayton, 1995). The focus of the wat schools was on promoting religious and cultural knowledge (Ayres, 2003; Clayton, 1995; Dy & Ninomiya, 2003; Steinberg, 1959). In particular, there was an emphasis on the importance of what was deemed to be appropriate conduct and behaviour, and the establishment of good relationships between individuals in society (Quinlan, 1992).

The administration of wat school education lay in the hands of chief or senior Buddhist monks ('bonzes') who not only taught the children but also carried out religious duties (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995; Dy & Ninomiya, 2003; Steinberg, 1959). There was no generally agreed curriculum, timetable, assessment and inspection (Bilodeau, 1955). This meant that, in principle, the bonzes in each wat school could decide what and how their students should learn. Nevertheless, scholars have indicated that the focus of the wat school curriculum was mainly on basic literacy, principles of Buddhism, traditional customs, and basic vocational skills associated with their lifestyle (Ayres, 2003; Clayton,

1995; Steinberg, 1959). This curriculum also supported social cohesion and traditional values in society (Quinlan, 1992).

Wat school education was based on rote learning, with students learning to read texts which were often printed on palm leaves. They also copied texts in their own handwriting (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Chandler, 2008; Steinberg, 1959). Students learned to read texts by heart and they repeated this learning process endlessly. Bilodeau (1955) has summarised the overall approach in this way:

> The pagoda schools had no curriculum, time-table, inspection, inspectors or examination. Students could join at any time of the year. Their only instruction was during part of the afternoon, when they learnt to read the sacred texts (which were printed on palm leaves) and copied out the written characters. In actual fact, the texts were learnt by heart, as a result of endless repetition, and the students where quite incapable of reading the words separately. (p. 21)

As a result, some students left school illiterate and what they learned at the pagoda schools was of no practical use to them in the outer world (Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959).

Wat school education was limited to a small population, namely, boys and young men, who served as novices at the wat. Thus, a large section of the population, and especially girls, was left uneducated (Ayres, 2003; Clayton, 1995; Dy & Ninomiya, 2003; Steinberg, 1959). Girls stayed at home and learned basic life-skills from their parents and elders. Ayres (2003) has indicated that, overall, before the arrival of the French, Cambodian peasants had low levels of literacy and acquired knowledge about cultural heritage primarily through oral and literary customs. This education system began to collapse in the mid-15th century when the Khmer Empire era went into decline (Chandler, 2008).

## The French Protectorate and the Colonial Period (1863–1953)

The French colonial presence in Cambodia for almost ten decades had little influence on education development in the country. Limited

education opportunities were provided for Cambodians, and much of what was provided was focused on primary school education, with only a few public and private high schools being established for the children of the colonisers and local elites (Ayres, 2003; Bit, 1991; Chandler, 2008; Clayton, 1995; Osborne, 1969). As a result, the French did not prepare the population to participate in the political process. Neither did they prepare the population for independence (Chandler, 2008). Nevertheless, they did have some influence on the development of the primary school system and on school leadership.

## Early French Interventions in Formal Education Development

Cambodia became a French protectorate and colony in 1863, soon after France had colonised Cochinchina (Bilodeau, 1955; Chandler, 2008; Osborne, 1969). Four years after that, King Norodom (1834–1904), with French support, established the first modern school in Cambodia. This was for children of the royal family, with French being the language of instruction (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955). In 1873, a French infantry officer, Ferry Rolles, founded the first French school. It became known as the French-language School of the Protectorate in Phnom Penh. It was renamed the College of the Protectorate in 1893 (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Chandler, 2008; Clayton, 1995; Fergusson & Masson, 1997; Quinlan, 1992). Shortly afterwards, more primary Franco-Cambodian schools were established in different provinces, including in Kampot, Kampong Cham and Kratie (Bilodeau, 1955).

The aim of the French intervention in education in Cambodia during this period was consistent with its broad policies for Cochinchina, which was to produce a workforce to promote colonial enterprise in the region (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995; Quinlan, 1992). The Franco-Cambodian primary schools were established to produce men willing to assist in colonial administration. These men, who were often termed ‘new men’ or ‘Westernised Cambodians’, moved away from their traditional values and ideologies and showed loyal service to the French in the advancement of French interests. They had the ability to engage in French-Khmer interactions. This was considered to be one of the most

important skills required for the colonial service as most French administrators could not speak the local language (Chandler, 2008; Clayton, 1995).

Efforts to introduce a French model of administration and education in Cambodia in the 19th century had little impact on the lives of Cambodians, and especially on the peasantry (Ayres, 2003; Chandler, 2008; Clayton, 1995; Osborne, 1969). Most Cambodians continued to send their sons to wat schools. Thus, the situation of the pre-colonial era persisted. These schools still had no standard curriculum, assessment practices, timetable, and inspection, and continued to be administered and taught by bonzes, whose knowledge was based on their religious precepts (Bilodeau, 1955). The aim of wat school education continued to be that of teaching Buddhist principles to boys, promoting the importance of appropriate conduct and behaviour and establishing good relationship between individuals in the society (Ayres, 2003; Quinlan, 1992).

Scholars have argued that the French deliberately restricted the provision of participation of Cambodians in formal education in order to strengthen their order and control over the population (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Chandler, 2008; Osborne, 1969). Ayres (2003) has stressed that the early French efforts to expand education to reach a large proportion of that population was accompanied by a lack of commitment and foresight. Unlike what occurred in Vietnam, they made no attempt to modernise the traditional education system (Osborne, 1969). As a result, wat schools were left to their own ways (Clayton, 1995).

## Promoting Formal and Compulsory Education

The early 20th century saw significant changes in general education and in primary school administration in Cambodia. Following the death of King Norodom in 1904, royal resistance to the French protectorate came to an end. King Sisowath was crowned head of the country and allowed the French to gradually take control (Chandler, 2008; Osborne, 1969). Given this opportunity, the French continued their efforts to expand their administration and education system in Cambodia. Schools now were rapidly established in most provincial towns.

The French intervention in education during this time had a significant influence on the administration of primary school education. In 1908, they began to introduce the 'khum school model', which was a combination of secular and religious education (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995). The associated state schools for Cambodians were under the supervision of the French residents in the country. Then, in 1911, the French established a local department of education to oversee the administration of the khum schools (Bilodeau, 1955). The communes were now allowed to open schools in their districts at their own expense. Also, the khum school model became popular among Cambodians in the countryside and they grew rapidly; the number increased from 203 in 1930 to 268 in 1939 (Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995).

Khum schools shared some of the characteristics of both the Franco-Cambodian schools and the traditional wat schools (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995). They were like Franco-Cambodian schools in that they were secular and staffed by lay teachers who were Cambodian graduates of a French education (Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995). Like wat schools, the khum schools were constructed and maintained by the local community. Education in these schools was offered through the local language, Khmer (Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995). At the same time, the schools provided an opportunity for rural Cambodians to enter Franco-Cambodian schools (Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995). Indeed, a large number of rural Cambodian children benefited from the French education model, and some of them were selected to participate in the French colonial service (Clayton, 1995).

Changes were also introduced to wat school education and administration. In 1906, King Sisowath issued the first decree on compulsory education, requiring parents to send their sons to wat schools at the age of eight to learn basic Khmer literacy and mathematics (Bilodeau, 1955). These schools also adopted Khmer as the medium of instruction and were inspected by lay teachers appointed by the government. However, wat school education still remained focused on religious principles and basic secular education, and continued to be operated by the bonzes. Also, a royal edict was issued in 1912. It allowed for fines to be imposed on parents who did not send their children to school (Bilodeau, 1955).

In 1915, the government promulgated the first Cambodian Civil Code, two articles of which required parents to send their children to school. Article 356 stated that "parents shall feed, maintain and bring up their child, plan his education, supervise his conduct, and give him good advice. They shall also teach him, and obtain for him the best tuition in their power" (Bilodeau, 1955, p. 17). Article 357 added that "parents who have been deprived of their parental rights shall meet the cost of feeding, maintaining and bringing up their children, and the cost of any tuition which the latter may receive" (Bilodeau, 1955, p. 17). In 1916, another royal instruction was issued requiring parents living within two kilometres of a Franco-Cambodian school to send their sons there when they reached the age of 10 (Bilodeau, 1955). However, these orders did not have any significant effect on the attitudes of parents toward education. Also, they did not indicate the minimum period of school attendance required, while girls continued to be excluded from schools (Bilodeau, 1955).

Primary school education and administration experienced a significant reform in 1918 when the French Governor-General, Albert Sarraut, approved an education plan aimed at establishing a permanent education system throughout Indochina (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955). A director general, whose permanent residence was based in Hanoi, Vietnam, was appointed to oversee its implementation. He was assisted by a head of the education ministry in each of the five countries (Bilodeau, 1955).

The education plan allowed French children living in Indochina to receive an education identical to that provided in France. It also allowed children from Indochina to receive a similar education, with six years of primary schooling being followed by four years of advanced primary schooling and then by three years of secondary schooling. Students then could exit with an equivalent to the French baccalaureate (Bilodeau, 1955). This made them eligible to gain admission to universities in Indochina or France. Further, in 1924, primary school education was divided into two cycles, namely, a three-year elementary education intended for a large population of students, and a higher level three-year elementary education for the most outstanding ones academically (Bilodeau, 1955).

To improve the quality of teaching of primary school teachers, the French established a teacher training centre with a demonstration school attached to it at the *College Sisowath* (Bilodeau, 1955). Clayton (1995) has stated that before the 1920s, Cambodian teachers were not properly prepared and were not sufficient in number to meet requirements. These teachers were graduates who had received short in-service training from French teachers during their teaching breaks. The new training course lasted four years and enabled teachers to obtain French-style teaching methods (Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995).

The 1918 education plan was not without its drawbacks. It failed to promote Cambodian participation in secular schools. Most parents continued to send their sons to wat schools as they considered that they provided a more relevant education than was provided by the secular schools (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955). Cambodians believed that the main focus of education should be on religious principles and practices and not on secular schooling with lay teachers using French as the language of instruction (Bilodeau, 1955; Quinlan, 1992). Also, girls had very limited education opportunities because of prejudice against the education of women. On this, Bilodeau (1955) has stated that there were fewer than one thousand girls attending school in 1930.

A lack of certified primary school teachers in the secular schools did not help to increase participation by Cambodians (Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995). Some primary school teachers were sent from France to teach in Cambodia, but the number was always small. According to Bilodeau (1955), the number of teachers sent from France decreased from 34 in 1931 to 28 in 1938. At the same time, very few Cambodians were able to enter the profession and those who did so often left in order to join the civil service (Bilodeau, 1955). To overcome the shortage of teachers, the French imported Vietnamese teachers, but they did not speak the local language (Bilodeau, 1955; Clayton, 1995). In addition, those working as administrative staff to support the expansion of education were frequently unable to read and write properly. This situation was compounded by the shortage of teaching and learning materials in Khmer and by the limited budget available to expand education (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959).

## Modernising Wat School Education

To overcome obstacles in expanding its administration and education system in Cambodia, the French proposed to make use of wat schools by changing their administrative and instructional methods (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955). This change, led by Mr. Louis Manipoud, who later became Chief Inspector of Primary Education, began with seeking cooperation from the bonzes to send their teachers to attend teacher training institutions (Bilodeau, 1955). In 1924, the bonzes in Kampot province agreed to send some wat school teachers to participate in French-style teacher training courses. These lasted nine months. The wat school teachers were trained by a Cambodian instructor who directed them in the teaching methods used in Franco-Cambodian primary schools. Bilodeau (1955) has explained that wat school teachers experienced practical demonstrations as part of their training. Standard lessons were provided for student teachers, who copied and analysed them. At the end of the course, they sat for a proficiency examination and those who passed it were sent back to establish modernised wat schools (Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). By 1930, 59 wat school teachers had completed the teacher training course and had returned as teachers to their respective 'modernised' wat schools (Bilodeau, 1955).

Based on the success of the first experiment, the French decided to establish demonstration schools in every province to train wat school teachers (Bilodeau, 1955). Each of these schools was attached to a wat which could be easily reached by bonzes within the commune. Also, 'modernised' wat schools increased rapidly throughout the country, with about 100 of them being built every year. In this connection, Bilodeau (1955) has stated that "in 1931, there were 101 modernised wat schools, with 3,332 students, and in 1939, 908 with 38,519 students" (p. 22). A 'higher demonstration school' was established in the capital "to prepare former bonze teachers to be heads of provincial demonstration schools and inspectors of modernised pagoda schools" (Bilodeau, 1955, p. 24). The training course here was of two years' duration.

It is helpful at this juncture to provide a clear picture of the administration of the primary school education system in the country during the period. Primary school education was divided into two streams, namely,

the 'Franco-Cambodian primary schools' or 'state primary schools,' and the 'modernised primary wat schools' or 'Cambodian primary schools'. Franco-Cambodian primary education lay solely in the hands of lay administrators. This education system consisted of two cycles, namely the elementary cycle and the complementary cycle. Each lasted three years (Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). Students were awarded the Certificate of Complementary Primary Studies (CCPS) when they completed the two cycles. Lessons were given in the Cambodian language in the first year and French was introduced at the beginning of the second year for all subjects except ethics and the teaching of the mother tongue (Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). In 1951–1952, there were 787 Franco-Cambodian primary schools, with 2650 teachers and 120,664 students (Bilodeau, 1955).

Modernised primary wat education took place at a wat and was operated by bonzes. This education was inspected by both religious and secular inspectors. Bilodeau (1955) has stated that modernised wat schools were "inspected by special inspectors, both priests and laymen, who were responsible to their respective provincial inspectors" (p. 22). In 1951–1952, there were 52 secular and 28 bonze inspectors in the country (Bilodeau, 1955). Modernised primary wat schools provided an elementary three-year course and used the same curriculum as the primary Franco-Cambodian schools, except that Cambodian was the only language of instruction and only boys were allowed to attend (Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). Classes started in the afternoon from 3.30 pm to 6.30 pm except on special religious days. Upon completion of the course, students could sit for the examination for the Certification of Elementary Primary School Teaching(CEPS).

In 1951–1952, there were 1447 'modernised' wat schools, with 1810 bonze teachers and 76,943 students (Bilodeau, 1955). While these helped to promote participation in schooling in the country, they were not without shortcomings. For example, they experienced a shortage of teachers as many bonzes left the temples. Bilodeau (1955) has reported that 514 teaching bonzes gave up their monastic life and returned to the 'outer world' between 1954 and 1956. In addition, schools lacked up-to-date facilities to support teaching and learning. Also, this education model was limited to providing for boys, leaving many girls uneducated (Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). As a result, 'modernised' wat schools were gradually turned into Franco-Cambodian schools.

## The Sihanouk Regime (1953–1970)

Cambodia gained full independence from France at the Geneva Conference on 9 November, 1953 (Chandler, 2008). King Norodom Sihanouk continued to lead the country in the post-colonial period between 1953 and 1970. A foreign policy of neutrality was adopted to acknowledge the important roles played by local communists in the fight for Cambodia's independence and to keep the country out of the escalating conflict in neighbouring Vietnam (Ayres, 2003; Kiernan, 2002).

The regime adopted both modernisation theory and human capital theory in an effort to develop the country economically. These theories view education as a means to develop individuals who could make social and economic contributions to the development of the modern state (Ayres, 2003). In this connection, Steinberg (1959) emphasised the following:

> One aspect of the new Cambodian nationalism [was] a changing emphasis in the goals of education. Traditionally, the purpose of education was to master and practice the Buddhist doctrine, thus gaining "merit." Today the student may also seek an education both as a means of personal advancement and as a patriotic duty. The educational goal of the French administration was to create a body of civil servants. Today an avowed aim of the Cambodian government [was] to train administrative and technical experts for a society that [was] becoming aware of the need for accelerated economic and social advancement. (p. 251)

As a result, the regime worked to expand the education system to reach a wide population and it introduced changes especially in primary school education to facilitate the building of an industrial and 'modern Cambodia' (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Bit, 1991).

### Expanding and Reforming Formal Education

Concerns regarding education development during this period were focused on education expansion and curriculum reform (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). To facilitate the expansion so that schooling could reach a large population in the country, the government

allocated a significant proportion of its annual national budget to the education sector. The indications are that the government of King Norodom Sihanouk allocated approximately 20 percent of its annual national expenditure between the 1950s and the 1960s to reform and expand the formal education system so that it could reach all parts of the country (Ayres, 2003; Dy, 2004; Fergusson & Masson, 1997). This commitment led to an increase in the number of schools at all levels, and especially in the number of primary schools (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Chandler, 2008; Fergusson & Masson, 1997).

The number of Cambodian public primary schools (formerly known as Franco-Cambodian public schools) increased from 1352 to 1653 between the years 1955–1956 and 1957–1958 (Ayres, 2003), although the number of 'modernised' wat schools increased by only 47 during the same period. The enrolment in primary school education also increased significantly. For example, in 1956–1957, there were about 220,570 boys and 85,920 girls enrolled in primary schools (Steinberg, 1959). The number of girls in schools increased from 11 percent in 1931 to 38 percent in 1957.

The regime also introduced changes to the existing primary school curriculum which had been adopted since 1918, when the French introduced education reform in the country. The curriculum was initially designed by the French to prepare a workforce that could help with the colonial administration. Access to this curriculum was limited to a small number of individuals (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). A new model of curriculum that not only promoted participation in education but also contributed to social and economic development, was now required. On this, Bilodeau (1955) has commented as follows:

> The nature of the present curriculum [seemed] to constitute a serious obstacle to school attendance; it no longer [met] the requirements of the times, [was] too difficult for most children, and [was] given in what to them [was] a foreign language. Revision [was] therefore essential… the primary course must be adapted to the needs of a new nation, and to the all school-aged population… it must allow for differences between town and country and between boys' and girls' education, for the future occupations of the students, for the circumstances now prevailing in the country and the position it [was] striving to reach, and for the progress made in education during the last 25 years. (p. 49)

The changes introduced aimed to promote 'Cambodianisation' or 'Khmerisation'. The Cambodian language became the language of instruction at schools and French was taught as a second language. The Ministry of Education also reduced the number of teaching hours in the Khmer and French language and produced textbooks and teaching resources in Khmer (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955). The primary school curriculum consisted of ethics, civics, history, arithmetic, geography, science and hygiene, the Cambodian language, manual work and draughtsmanship, and physical training (Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959).

While the policies implemented helped to promote participation in education in the country and to produce a workforce required for national development, multiple challenges emerged. One major challenge related to the lack of economic resources to support the rapid expansion of education (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). Overall, a large proportion of the government's annual budget was allocated to facilitate the implementation of education expansion projects, but it was never sufficient to respond to the growing enrolment rate. The growth meant that more schools were required to be maintained and constructed, but the government could not afford to meet this challenge even with such French and American assistance (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955), as the 70 million riels provided by the USA to the Ministry of Education to support the changes (Steinberg, 1959).

The limited economic resources devoted to education change led to a lack of infrastructure and education materials (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). The government spent its limited budget on constructing new schools, repairing existing schools, and purchasing furniture. Schools were poorly built, classrooms were very crowded, and instructional materials were in short supply. Bilodeau (1955) has described the situation as follows:

> …to deal swiftly and economically with the growing number of students, many 'straw hut' schools were built with roofs of thatch and walls made of latania leaves. These schools [were] dark, and students sometimes [found] it difficult to read in them. When the roofs [began] to break up and [let] in the rain, the floor [was] covered with puddles. The furniture [was] usually aged and worn. School materials [were] in very

> short supply; often the students, and sometimes even the master, [had] no textbooks at all. Many classrooms [lacked] geographical maps and charts. (p. 29)

These circumstances had a negative influence on participation in schools in the countryside and also on the quality of education (Ayres, 2003). Most students were denied the opportunity to receive more than three years of education owing to a shortage of school facilities. Indeed, Steinberg (1959, p. 157) reported that "in 1958, only two-thirds of the children between the ages of seven and 12 were enrolled in the primary schools".

The shortage of qualified teachers also compounded the implementation of the proposed education changes in the country (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). Cambodia had long suffered from a deficit of teachers, especially in the 1960s, when a large number was required to support the rapid expansion of education. In 1957, there were only 7627 primary school teachers (Steinberg, 1959), while there were 1653 Cambodian primary schools with 220,570 boys and 85,920 girls enrolled (Ayres, 2003). Also, the academic quality of the existing teachers was generally of a low standard. According to Steinberg (1959), only about 5 percent of teachers were 'diploma level teachers' who had completed 13 years of primary and secondary school education plus one year of normal schooling, while others had completed a primary school education only. Compounding the situation was the rapid turnover of teachers.

Adding to these challenges, the education polices were subjected to several criticisms. One criticism related to policies failing to take into account the realities of the circumstances in the country, and simply following what was very much of a French education model (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). The policies failed to acknowledge the importance of traditional education which had been in the country for centuries. Also, they failed to demonstrate relevance to the social and economic situation in the country. On this, Ayres (2003) has explained that while more than 80 percent of the population was engaged in some form of agriculture, the education system oriented students towards the liberal arts.

## Primary School Leadership Development

The administration of the education system during this period, as already stated, very much reflected the French model, which was a centralised one (Ayres, 2003; Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959). Public education was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, except for specialised schools associated with other ministries. The Ministry had full control over education planning and administration, including the development of school curriculum, recruitment and deployment of teachers, disbursement of budget, construction of school infrastructure, and school inspection (Ayres, 2003; Steinberg, 1959). With regard to school inspection, the Ministry assigned a national inspector to each province (Steinberg, 1959) to supervise school operations, including teaching and learning, school building and school administration. The inspectors observed classroom instruction and provided feedback to teachers to facilitate improvement. However, there was no indication of how often a school inspection should take place and how it should be conducted. Also, little emphasis was placed on the roles of school principals in promoting school improvement.

School syllabi were developed by the Ministry of Education and were highly prescribed. Ayres (2003) has commented that curriculum content was centrally developed, with detailed prescriptions by regulation, including the required number of teaching hours. School principals and teachers had no influence on curriculum development.

The Ministry also developed teachers' guides to help teachers in their teaching. This meant that teachers had very minimal flexibility in providing classroom instruction, except to deliver what was already prescribed in the guide. In addition, the Ministry established a Cultural Committee to take care of the promotion of language in the school and the preparation of school textbooks (Steinberg, 1959). These textbooks were designed by the Ministry and were distributed to schools for use. However, the small number of them distributed prevented some students from receiving them (Bilodeau, 1955; Steinberg, 1959).

It can be deduced from the above discussion that primary school leadership and management were not deemed important areas of education

development during this period. The highly centralised education system allowed very little room for school principals to concentrate on school planning and administration. Rather, they were required to comply with centrally set regulations, rules, and curricula. Schools mainly relied on input from the Ministry. This related to the supply of teachers, textbooks, school budgets, and various resources.

## The Khmer Republic (1970–1975)

The period of peace and prosperity came to an end in the late 1960s when the country suffered seriously from the political, social and economic dislocations of being a nation at war (Ayres, 2003; Chandler, 2008). Eventually, King Norodom Sihanouk was overthrown in the early 1970s by Commander Lon Nol, who was supported by the USA, and the new regime, known as the Khmer Republic, was established to rule the country (Chandler, 2008). This regime introduced new education policies that reflected its political ideology and disregarded what had been achieved by the previous government. However, the implementation of policies was significantly affected by the civil war taking place in the country.

### The Decline of the Education System

The government of Lon Nol set a new direction for education, which aimed to promote republican and democratic practices in the country (Ayres, 2003; Chandler, 2008). New education policies were formulated, with a particular focus on three important elements. The first related to a perceived link between civic education and the economic and political needs of the regime (Ayres, 2003). A 'Committee of Intellectuals' was formed to oversee the design of a programme for civic education. The committee proposed a number of changes to the existing civics' education programme, including abolishing reference to the monarchy in the school curriculum, providing economic and political education, and aligning history, geography, and civics education with the regime's ideology (Ayres, 2003).

Another element of the new education policies was related to the change of language policy in schools. This required that Khmer alone be used as the language of instruction. Ayres (2003) has stated that such a policy had actually been introduced to the schools in 1967, but there had been very little progress in its implementation. The new regime renewed the policy by replacing French instruction with Khmer instruction for all lessons. Also, it established committees to deal with the implementation of this policy within schools and school districts (Ayres, 2003), and work was undertaken on the production of education materials in Khmer.

The third element of the education policies promoted by the regime was the mobilisation of students to fight against the Vietnamese occupation of the country (Ayres, 2003; Chandler, 2008). Students were encouraged to participate in politics by being provided with an opportunity to volunteer for military service and to participate in refugee aid projects (Ayres, 2003). Various campaigns were organised in schools to recruit student volunteers throughout the country and many were attracted to them.

The regime faced a number of challenges while implementing these education policies. The first was related to the widespread armed conflict in the country (Ayres, 2003). Many people decided to flee from affected areas to the capital city for safety. This had a significant influence on participation in education throughout the country. While the government promoted policies to retain children in schools and to prevent rapid refugee movement, it was not successful because the armed conflict escalated (Ayres, 2003). The number of dislocated residents in rural areas increased and many schools were closed, abandoned or destroyed. On this, Ayres (2003) has stressed that in the academic year 1970–1971, 40 percent of students attending schools in the city were refugees from rural areas.

Armed conflict not only caused the destruction of education infrastructure and disrupted learning opportunities for children, it also impeded the implementation of education polices. For example, the implementation of the Khmerisation of curricula and materials was disrupted because the committee members recruited to do the job were forced to flee for safety. Some fled to the capital city while others moved to France. Ayres (2003) also noticed that in those schools that remained open, teaching and learning materials were scarce.

### Primary School Leadership Development

To date, little is known about leadership and management of primary schools during the time in question. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the administration of the school system resembled that under the previous model, which was highly centralised. Public education was under the administration of the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sport (MNEYS). The Ministry had four main divisions, namely, the Directorate General of Education, the Directorate of Higher Education, the National Educational Planning Office, and the Higher Council of Universities (Va, 2006). Each division had different responsibilities.

The Directorate General of Education was responsible for primary, secondary and technical school education. The education system consisted of six years of primary school education and seven years of secondary school education. Primary school education was divided into two cycles of three years each, while secondary school education comprised two cycles of four years, followed by three years.

## The Khmer Rouge Regime (1975–1979)

The Khmer Republic eventually collapsed and was replaced by Democratic Kampuchea, or the Khmer Rouge, on 17 April 1975. The regime, guided by communist ideology, aimed to establish an egalitarian and agrarian society, with foreign intervention being refused (Ayres, 2003; Chandler, 2008). The entire population was forced to move to the countryside and was reduced to the state of peasants. The regime eventually destroyed much of the country through a brutal genocide which claimed millions of lives and wreaked havoc on the socio-cultural and structural infrastructure (Ayres, 1999, 2003; Chandler, 2008).

### Abolition of the Formal Education System

The government of Democratic Kampuchea introduced a new education model which rejected the existing education system in both structure and content because it was built on the French model of education and failed

to contribute to its view of nation building (Ayres, 1999, 2003). While little is known about the structure and content of the new education model, the Party's 'Four-Year Plan', which was not based on input from, and consultation with, relevant stakeholders, highlighted three ideological elements (Ayres, 1999, 2003). First, education was for literacy, specifically focusing on learning letters and numbers. Secondly, technology could not be learnt without practice (Ayres, 1999, 2003). Thirdly, learning should promote acquiring a 'good' political consciousness based on the ideological orientation of the revolutionary party (Ayres, 1999, 2003).

The plan indicated that the new education model would consist of three years of primary school education, three years of general secondary school education, three years of technical secondary school education, and three years of tertiary technical education (Ayres, 1999, 2003). Also, what was proposed resembled the then Chinese practice of spending half of one's time in study and half of one's time at work. However, other than listing the subjects for study, the plan did not specify what should be taught in school. The subjects were reading and writing, arithmetic, geography, natural science, physics, chemistry, history of the revolution, and Party politics, consciousness and organisation (Ayres, 1999).

It appears that, in reality, formal education during the period was almost non-existent. Ayres (1999, 2003) has indicated that education was not available at all during the early years of the regime. Rather, attention was given to eliminating enemies of the revolution and to gaining control over the population. Dunnett (1993) has also stated that during the Khmer Rouge regime, formal classroom education was abandoned and public schools and libraries were either destroyed or used as communal kitchens, prisons, storehouses, and dormitories. Bit (1991) largely shared this view, arguing that education during the Khmer Rouge period was at the most minimal level and was focused on raising political consciousness and resolving production issues. Ayres (1999) has described the education situation during the time as follows:

> The conditions at the 'schools' were hardly conducive to effective learning. In addition to working in a buffalo stable, in a thatched *sala* or under trees, under the supervision of 'teachers' with no credentials, the students were

> required to make their own learning instruments. While the leaders of *Angkar* could claim that the students were 'self reliant', 'masters' of their education, and not dependent on foreign models, materials or textbooks, the cost to the Cambodian population, in terms of educational quality, was immeasurable. (p. 214)

What few teachers there were, were selected from the peasant workforce who supported the revolutionary ideology and often lacked formal teaching qualifications (Ayres, 1999, 2003). In addition, what schools there were often functioned without such basic teaching and learning resources as textbooks, tables, chairs and blackboards (Ayres, 1999; Dunnett, 1993). Also, children often lived away from their parents and suffered from malnutrition (Ayres, 2003).

### Primary School Leadership Development

There was no school leadership and management preparation throughout this period as little formal education existed. What did exist was organised mainly to raise political awareness amongst the population. Maoist ideology was adopted and was strictly put into operation by the revolutionary regime. Again, however, there was no clear structure and content for a curriculum, no appropriate classrooms for learning, no trained teachers, and no proper basic teaching and learning materials.

## The People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979–1989)

The main armed conflicts and genocide in Cambodia ceased following the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979. The People's Republic of Kampuhea (PRK) was established and remained in power from 1979 to 1989. The government operated under a very challenging situation to restore and rehabilitate the education system as it had been almost totally destroyed (Ayres, 2003; Pou, 2012; Ratcliffe, Patch, & Quinn, 2009). This work was carried out with support from the Vietnamese, allies in the Eastern Bloc countries, and international organisations (Ayres, 2003; Chandler, 2008; Dunnett, 1993; Pou, 2012).

## Early Recovery and Restoration of the Education System

The education landscape in Cambodia from 1979 to 1989 could be characterised as being one of early recovery and restoration of the education system, with a focus on provision rather than quality (Ayres, 2000, 2003; Dy & Ninomiya, 2003; Pou, 2012; Ratcliffe et al., 2009). Special attention was given to rehabilitating basic education infrastructure and associated human resources. A central administrative body in charge of education was set up. The establishment of associated provincial and district education administrations followed. This symbolised the return of public education services. A 10-year education system (4+3+3), comprising four years of primary school education, three years of lower secondary school education and three years of upper secondary school education, was established to meet the urgent needs of the country (Ayres, 2003; Dy & Ninomiya, 2003). Primary and secondary school teacher training centres were opened in some provinces. Schools were repaired and established to accommodate students. Dunnett (1993) has stated that about 6000 schools were re-established during the early phase of education rehabilitation. Also, thousands of teachers were recruited, trained and deployed to schools throughout the country. Most teachers, however, had only received a very limited education (Dunnett, 1993).

School enrolment increased significantly during the period. Primary school enrolment, for example, increased from about 0.2 million to 1.6 million (Ratcliffe et al., 2009). Little information is available to provide a clear profile of this student enrolment and of strategies deployed to promote access to education. There was no proper regulation in place to administer enrolments. Also, it transpired that primary school students as young as five years old and as old as 16 years were often in attendance together in the one class (Ratcliffe et al., 2009).

The rehabilitation of the education system commenced during this period in the face of very challenging circumstances. According to Ayres (2003), the government of the PRK faced two main challenges. First, it had to deal with the legacy of destruction, turmoil, and trauma created by the previous regime. In particular, the destruction of human resources had been devastating; it was estimated that at least 1.7 million people, many of whom were scholars, educators, teachers, and students, had died

from execution, starvation, disease, and overwork (Ayres, 1999, 2003; Kiernan, 2002). Also, about 75 percent of teachers, 96 percent of higher education students, and 67 percent of primary and secondary school-aged students were killed during the Khmer Rouge regime (Ayres, 2000, 2003). By 1979, there were fewer than 5000 teachers in the country (Dunnett, 1993). This meant that there was a critical shortage of teachers during the recovery period.

A second challenge faced by the government of the PRK was related to the strong influence of the Vietnamese on the rehabilitation of the education system (Ayres, 2003; Pou, 2012). While there was no general agreement on the number of Vietnamese experts and advisers to be sent to Cambodia to assist in the development of the education system, the control and influence of the Vietnamese were pervasive (Ayres, 2003). On this, Ayres (2003) has stressed that

> Vietnamese advisers imposed on a Cambodian ministry lacking both ideas and expertise a system of education that bore a striking resemblance to that functioning in Vietnam. The primary school course, which had been divided into three three-year cycles prior to 1975, was condensed into four grades. Secondary school involved a further six years of study, broken into three-year cycles. The ten-year structure, and the ascending numbering system adopted to denote school grades, were identical to those of Vietnam. (p. 130)

The school curriculum also resembled Vietnamese socialist and revolutionary education plans. This influence was reflected, in particular, in the development of the history syllabus and the emphasis on communist political morality (Ayres, 2003).

The education recovery process was also compounded by financial constraints (Ayres, 2003; Pou, 2012). This resulted in cooperation being sought from parents of students and from community members. Parents had to pay school fees. These were used to cover the cost of school operations. However, the practice had a negative impact on promoting access to schooling as some parents could not afford to pay the fees (Ratcliffe et al., 2009).

During these early recovery years, the PRK government received support from the Eastern bloc countries. Clayton (1998) has indicated that

2650 Cambodians completed degree programmes between 1983 and 1989 in the Soviet Union, East Germany, Vietnam, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Cuba. Support from international communities and multilateral donors also began to flow into the country. For example, between 1979 and 1981, UNICEF and the International Red Cross coordinated a massive international relief assistance programme which cost approximately USD 370 million (Dunnett, 1993). They also provided technical assistance to aid the recovery of the education system.

## Primary School Leadership Development

While the government, with support from development agencies, worked aggressively to reconstruct the education system, school leadership and management were not deemed to be important. Much of the attention was given to rehabilitating the educational infrastructure and developing human resources in order to get everything to function smoothly. The administration of the system during this period strongly resembled the Vietnamese equivalent, which was based on a decentralised management model (Ayres, 2003). This model allowed much authority for decision making to be vested in the hands of people at the lower levels of the education system. The adoption of a decentralised management approach was considered very appropriate because of the critical lack of infrastructure, facilities, and human resources (Ayres, 2003). It helped to restore the education system fairly quickly and make education services available to a wider population.

While the decentralised-education approach assumed that provincial, district and school-level-stakeholders would have a lot of responsibility for decision marking, it was not clear what kind of responsibility and authority had been transferred to them. There appears to have been no policies, strategies or plans in place to promote decentralisation. This is likely to have created misunderstanding about lines of responsibility and authority for decision making among education stakeholders at the different education levels. The situation may be attributed to Cambodia being still at its very early stage of recovery and to the critical shortage of

available resources to facilitate planning and development. Indeed, it has been stated that education planning during the period "was largely *ad hoc*, led by an initial group of 10 dedicated professionals under the leadership of [an] MoEYS Secretary of State" (Ratcliffe et al., 2009, p. 129).

Overall, the situation is likely to have constrained the performance of primary school principals for a number of reasons, including inadequate school infrastructure and facilities, financial constraints, a deficit of teaching and learning materials, shortage of trained teachers, student dropout and repetition, and lack of community involvement (Ayres, 2003; Ratcliffe et al., 2009). The situation was further compounded by the fact that primary school principals were denied professional preparation and development. They had been selected from a pool of the population with limited formal education that survived the genocide. There were no clear criteria for selecting and appointing them. Because of this and because of the great shortage of personnel, individuals with only basic formal education could become primary school principals.

## UNTAC and Coalition Government (1989–1998)

Following the withdrawal of the Vietnamese in late 1989, the 1991 Paris Peace Accord, and the 1993 national election, social and political changes had a significant impact on education development in the country. The coalition government viewed education as a means to produce human resources required for national reconstruction. As a result, a number of significant changes took place.

### Reconstruction of the Education System

Education development now moved to a stage of reconstruction, with a more systematic approach to the development of education being introduced. To facilitate the reconstruction process, the government formulated two key legislative and policy documents, namely the *Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia* (Royal Government of Cambodia, 1993) and the *Policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport* (1996). Each of these will now be considered in turn.

## The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia (1993)

The government of Cambodia published a constitution in 1993. This helped to accelerate the speed of education reconstruction. Chap. 6 of the Constitution defines the rights of people to education, the rights of children, and the role the State should play in the establishment of a universal education system in the country (Royal Government of Cambodia, 1993). It also promotes the principles of education freedom and education equality. Specifically, Articles 68 of the Chapter states that "the State shall provide free primary and secondary education to all citizens in public schools. Citizens should receive education for at least nine years" (Royal Government of Cambodia, 1993). Article 65 adds that "the State shall protect and upgrade citizens' rights to quality education at all levels and shall take necessary steps for quality education to teach all citizens" (Royal Government of Cambodia, 1993).

## Policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (1996)

The Constitution of Cambodia, published in 1993, enabled the official establishment of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) to take place. The MoEYS took the lead in facilitating education reconstruction. The Ministry published its education policy in 1996. This was republished every year in a chart of education indicators produced by the Department of Planning (UNESCO, 2008). The policy outlines four broad aims, namely, (i) to universalise nine years of basic education and promote functional literacy, (ii) to modernise and enhance the quality of education through effective reform, (iii) to link education and training with labour markets and society, and (iv) to rehabilitate and develop youth and sport (UNESCO, 2008). Several education sub-policies and strategies were formulated to facilitate the achievement of these broad aims.

## Restructuring the Education System

The MoEYS started to implement a formal strategy review and a policy development and planning process in order to achieve the broad

education aims, especially for promoting access to education and enhancing the quality of education (Ratcliffe et al., 2009). In 1996, the MoEYS introduced a 12-year education system (6+3+3), comprising six years of primary school education, three years of lower secondary education and three years of upper secondary school education. This replaced the 10-year education system (4+3+3) in place from 1979 to 1986 and the 11-year education system (5+3+3) in place from 1986 to 1996 (Ayres, 2003; Dy & Ninomiya, 2003; MoEYS, 2007).

During the reconstruction period, formal schooling was expanded, particularly in the first years of the decade. Enrolment, especially at the primary school level, increased significantly. The number of students in primary school had increased from 947,317 in 1980 to 2.1 million in 1999 (MoEYS, 1994, 1999). While enrolment at lower secondary school level had decreased from 326,403 in 1987–1988 to 183,793 in 1992–1993, because of a low birth rate in the late 1970s, enrolment at the upper secondary school level had doubled between 1986 and 1993 (MoEYS, 1994). Changes were also introduced to the curriculum at the primary and secondary school level. In particular, the Khmer language, mathematics, and history were revised to respond to the changes in the education landscape (MoEYS, 1994).

## Challenges for Education Reconstruction

While impressive progress in education reconstruction was achieved, a number of challenges remained. These related to the lack of training for teachers, an inappropriate school curriculum, shortage of teaching materials, lack of schools, high levels of dropout, low attendance rates, poor quality education, and problems constraining parents from sending their children to school (Ayres, 2003; Dy & Ninomiya, 2003; MoEYS, 1994). With regard to access to education, while there was an overall improvement in national enrolment, many children could not attend a primary school, not to mention a secondary school. Also, because of the lack of school facilities and classrooms, many primary school classrooms were overcrowded, often with more than 100 students in a class, many of whom were over 15 years of age (MoEYS, 1994). The situation was

compounded by a lack of teaching and learning materials; many children could not afford to buy such basic learning resources as textbooks, notebooks and uniforms (MoEYS, 1994).

Financial constraints also affected the process of education reconstruction (Ayres, 2003; MoEYS, 1994; Pou, 2012; Ratcliffe et al., 2009). The national budget allocated for the education sector was low. In 1993, for example, the total national budget allocated for education was 13.8 percent of total public spending (MoEYS, 1994). On this, Duy, Hang, and Yos (2001) stated that while the government had repeatedly attempted to increase public expenditure on education to 15 percent, it had failed to reach the target by the year 2000. The associated financial constraints had a negative effect on the implementation of education reconstruction projects, including the construction and maintenance of buildings, the production and distribution of materials, and the salaries of staff (Ayres, 2003; MoEYS, 1994).

The situation led Cambodia to rely on foreign assistance. During this period, the number of NGOs, international multilateral donors and international communities located in Cambodia increased steadily (Ayres, 2003; Ratcliffe et al., 2009). Following the 1990 EFA Conference, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank were present in the country to help the government to reconstruct the education sector. UNESCO, for example, helped the Ministry of Education to train 1200 education officials in education planning and management and to establish the Educational Management Information System Centre (Dy & Ninomiya, 2003). It was estimated that the foreign assistance given to the education sector in Cambodia between 1992 and 1999 was worth USD 50 million per annum (Asian Development Bank, 2000). This period has been described as being that of the 'donorship phase' (Ratcliffe et al., 2009).

## Primary School Leadership Development

While some progress was achieved in promoting education reconstruction in general during the period, there were no significant developments in relation to the administration of primary schools. The organisation of

the education system continued to be highly decentralised due to the weak structures in place at the central office of education, a matter which was attributed to a shortage of competent education staff (Ayres, 2003; World Bank, 1994). This situation is likely to have had a detrimental impact on the provision of effective coordination and supervision within the system. In particular, it is likely to have been detrimental to the quality of the education services provided by the central office of education, including in relation to curriculum development, textbook production and distribution, teacher education, monitoring and evaluation of learning achievements, and school inspection (World Bank, 1994). Overall, it has been argued that the lack of a major national education agenda and an associated strategic framework for action is likely to have constrained the capacity of the central office of education in promoting effective coordination and direction for education activities of donors and development partners (World Bank, 1994).

Because of the weak structures within the central office of education, provincial education offices had a significant amount of autonomy in the management of schools. One area in which this revealed itself was in relation to the education budget. Up until 1993, the central office of education had no involvement in planning for, and distribution of, the budget for education. Rather, provincial education budgets were developed and submitted directly to the Ministry of Finance (MoF) (World Bank, 1994). Also, the recruitment and training of teachers lay in the hands of people located in the provincial education offices. However, the criteria and requirements in relation to the appointment and selection of school principals were not made explicit.

Primary school principals continued to receive very limited support in their work and to suffer a great deal from the scarcity of resources required to operate their schools. With minimal financial support from the central government, schools had to rely greatly on contributions from parents, community members, and the non-governmental organisations, for funds. In this connection, Bray (1999) has indicated that the education budget in Cambodia was derived from various sources, namely the central government, NGOs, external aid agencies, self-generated budgets, and generous donor groups which included politicians, parents and local community members. Household and community members appear to

have made the largest contribution to schools, which may have amounted to almost 60 percent of the total contribution (Bray, 1999).

There was an attempt to promote a centralised approach to education administration during the period. This was evident in an effort to strengthen the existence of the central office of education in order to facilitate the coordination and direction of education services. The MoEYS, with support from UNESCO, established an Educational Management Information System Centre and trained education officials involved in administration to assist in education planning and management (Dy & Ninomiya, 2003).

Attention was also given to promoting school inspections. In the school year of 1994–1995, the MoEYS established a professional inspectorate body to oversee the operations of schools. Special training was provided for the inspectors. Indeed, immediately after the establishment of the inspectorate, 200 teachers were trained to become inspectors (Va, 2006). Their work was focused on assessing and rating school performance (World Bank, 1994). Prior to this, no professional inspectorate organisation for education had existed in Cambodia. Rather, school inspection was carried out by a group of education administrators who lacked any specific knowledge or training for the task (Va, 2006).

## Recent Developments in Relation to Primary School Leadership

Cambodia has witnessed significant social and political change since violent conflict ended in the country in 1998. The national election held in that year brought about a shift in the state of development of the country. The new post-conflict era led to developments, accompanied by peace and political stability that resulted in steady economic growth and social progress. The period also saw a movement from 'donorship' to 'partnership' and to 'ownership', with the government working with donors and development partners to bring about changes in education. In 1999, the MoEYS organised a consultative workshop on education which provided significant input for the formulation of both education policy and strategic plans. In 2000, an EFA Country Assessment Report (UNESCO,

2000) was produced to assess progress toward the EFA's education targets. This proved valuable for the formulation of the *National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015* (MoEYS, 2003), the *Education Strategic Plan* (2006–2010) (MoEYS, 2005a) and the *Education Sector Support Programme* (2006–2010) (MoEYS, 2005b). Also, international intervention in the education sector became coordinated.

The next section of this chapter addresses developments that took place relating to primary school leadership in Cambodia from 1998 until 2015. It is divided into four sub-parts. The first sub-part provides an outline of the broad context within which primary school education developments have taken place. Here, key policies and strategies that have guided the development of primary school education are considered. The second sub-part provides an overview of the governance and administrative structures of the education system. The third sub-part highlights specific developments in relation to primary school education. The final sub-part details specific developments relating to leadership at the primary school level in the country.

## Laws and Policy Frameworks for Education Development

Governments in Cambodia in the post-conflict era formulated some key policy documents to facilitate the development of education in the country. This section of the chapter now considers those that relate to primary school education and primary school leadership.

### The Cambodian National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015

The first *National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015* was launched in 2003. The decision to formulate this policy document not only reflected the broad demographic, macro-economic and social development outlook in the country, it was also a response to the international education development agenda. In particular, it reflected a strategic commitment on the part of the government to promoting the *Cambodian Millennium*

*Development Goals* to achieve universal primary education by 2015 (MoEYS, 2003). It was recognised that the achievement of this goal would require short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies. While the *National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015* (MoEYS, 2003) outlined long-term strategies, the *Education Strategic Plan 2001–2005* (MoEYS, 2001a), *Education Strategic Plan 2006–2010* (MoEYS, 2005a), *Education Strategic Plan 2009–2013* (MoEYS, 2010) and *Education Strategic Plan 2014–2018* (MoEYS, 2014a) and *Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) 2006–2010* (2005b) addressed the medium-term education strategies.

The *National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015* set out comprehensive technical and financial plans which focused on the six interrelated aspects of basic education of early childhood care and education, formal basic education, life skills, non-formal education and adult literacy, gender equity and education quality (MoEYS, 2003). It also laid out a number of associated strategic plans which aimed to promote access to education and the quality of education at the basic education level. These related to the abolition of school fees, the introduction of formula-based block grants for schools, the establishment of a decentralised education service management system, and the introduction of vacation-time remedial classes to reduce the incidence of students repeating classes or dropping out of school (MoEYS, 2003).

## Education Strategic Plans

Education Strategic Plans (ESPs) were formulated as a response to broader development plans and priorities, and especially to the *National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015* (MoEYS, 2005a, 2010). While the first ESP 2001–2005 was executed in 2001, in 2014 the MoEYS started to implement its fifth plan, namely, ESP 2014–2018 (MoEYS, 2014a). All of the ESPs laid out key education objectives, including the vision of the MoEYS to develop highly qualified personnel in order to develop a knowledge-based society within Cambodia to lead, manage and develop the Education, Youth, and Sport sector in the country in order to respond to its socio-economic and cultural development needs and to regional and

international realities (MoEYS, 2005a, 2010, 2014a). The ESPs also reflected the efforts of government, through the MoEYS, to realise the education goals outlined in the *Cambodian Millennium Development Goals* and the *National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015*.

The ESPs focused on three broad education areas, namely equitable access to education services, quality and efficiency of education services, and institutional development and capacity building for decentralisation (MoEYS, 2010, 2014a). In relation to primary school education, the fifth ESP 2014–2018 has outlined a number of key strategies and programmes, including in relation to increasing enrolment in primary schools, revising the primary school curriculum, improving the quality of education, and strengthening accountability in the primary schools (MoEYS, 2014a).

## Education Law (2007)

The government of Cambodia officially announced the adoption of its first Education Law in 2007 (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2007). The drafting and reviewing process began in 2002 and was led by the MoEYS, in cooperation with various key development partners, including the Asian Development Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF (Chhinh & Dy, 2009). It consists of 11 chapters which outline national education goals and structures. These relate to the general provision of education services, the establishment of government institutions in charge of education, the administration and management of education, the organisation of the education system, the enhancement of the quality and efficiency of the education services, guidance on the formulation of education policies, plans and strategies, education rights and obligations, utilisation of resources for education, and accountability in education (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2007).

## Education Sub-sector Policies and Strategies

A number of education sub-sector polices, strategies, guidelines and programmes have been developed to facilitate the achievement of the broad education polices and strategies. Three of them are considered in this

section because they are related to the development of primary school education and school leadership. They are the policy for curriculum development (2005–2009), the policy on child friendly schools (2007) and the policy on teacher education (2013).

## The Policy for Curriculum Development

The MoEYS introduced its national policy for curriculum development for general education (Grades 1–12) in 1996 (MoEYS, 2004). In order to respond to the social and political changes in the country, this policy was reviewed in 2004. The revised curriculum policy 2005–2009 incorporated changes to some key features of the 1996 curriculum called for an increase in the teaching time allocation, a definition and clarification of life skills education, the integration of science and social science in basic education, the introduction of a foreign language to primary school education, the development of standards in Khmer and Mathematics at the end of Grade 3 and 6, and the promotion of upper secondary provision through a public-private partnership (MoEYS, 2004).

The 2005–2009 curriculum change was undertaken to enable the achievement of such overall education plans as the *National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015* (MoEYS, 2003), the *Education Strategic Plan 2006–2010* (MoEYS, 2005a) and the *Education Sector Support Programme 2006–2010* (MoEYS, 2005b). It was also a response to globalisation, regionalisation, and individualisation. The curriculum policy provided the overall guidelines for the development of the general school curriculum, including the aims of the curriculum, the organisation of the curriculum, the development of life skills programmes, and the development of education at the level of basic education (primary and lower secondary school education) and upper secondary education (MoEYS, 2004).

## Child Friendly School Policy

The MoEYS, with support from UNICEF, Save the Children Norway, and Kampuchea Action for Primary Education (KAPE), introduced the notion

of a Child Friendly School (CFS) to the Cambodian basic education system through a pilot study in 2001 (MoEYS, 2007). This took place as a result of a strategic response of the government to promoting the achievement of universal primary school education and ensuring that all students would achieve a nine-year basic education. The meeting of Southeast Asian Ministers for Education Organisation (SEAMEO) held in May 2004 helped to reinforce the principles of CFS in Cambodia, while member countries also agreed to promote them in their home countries as a means of achieving equity and quality in education (MoEYS, 2007).

At the same time, it was not until 2005 that the MoEYS in Cambodia began drafting the *Child Friendly School Policy Framework* (MoEYS, 2007). The process required that information be provided by key organisations and representatives of provinces that had participated in the implementation of CFS. Eventually, in 2007, the CFS Policy was approved for implementation nationwide. It was developed as a strategic action plan to contribute to the achievement of national education goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the National Plan of Education for All, the Education Strategic Plans, and the Education Sector Support Programme (MoEYS, 2007).

The Cambodian CFS policy framework was built on a notion that a school should provide a learning environment that recognises and nurtures children's basic rights. It focuses on six major dimensions: inclusive education; effective learning; health, safety and protection of children; gender responsiveness; the participation of children, families, and communities in school operation; and effective and sustainable implementation of CSF policy (MoEYS, 2007). Each of these dimensions is accompanied by various objectives and activities. For example, the objective of inclusive education is to ensure that all children, including disadvantaged groups have equitable access to education and to support them. The policy also outlined strategies that promote student-centred learning (MoEYS, 2007).

## Teacher Policy

The MoEYS approved the implementation of a teacher policy in 2013, aimed at achieving the objectives of broad national policies and priorities

and education strategic plans and polices. This policy applies to both public and private education institutions, ranging from pre-schools to upper secondary schools and teacher training centres. The vision is to develop teachers' knowledge and skills, along with the moral and professional competencies recognised as being important by society, and to promote a mission to develop teachers with quality, competencies and accountability in line with their professional code of conduct (MoEYS, 2013). The policy also outlines four major objectives: (i) to attract and motivate competent individuals into the teaching profession, (ii) to ensure the quality of pre-service training, (iii) to ensure regular professional development and in-service training for teachers, and (iv) to ensure the conditions necessary for teachers to fulfil their professional activity effectively and efficiently (MoEYS, 2013). Furthermore, the policy sets out a number of strategies and action plans to facilitate the achievement of goals and objectives.

## Governance and Administrative Structures of the Education System

The post-conflict government of Cambodia has restructured its socio-economic and political structures to align with national strategic plans and policies. The restructure has had a significant impact on the governance of the education system in the country. The current education system is divided into three main administrative levels. The MoEYS is the highest level when it comes to governing, developing, delivering, and monitoring education services. Provincial Offices of Education (POE) act as the MoEYS' secretariat and are responsible for a number of tasks, including supporting the MoEYS in implementing education policies, strategies, plans and guidelines, preparing and submitting plans for further development of education, providing statistics and indicators of schools, staff and students, managing education staff matters and development within the province, and providing technical support for teaching, preparing materials and conducting school inspections (UNESCO, 2008).

District Offices of Education (DOE) act as technical implementing bodies of the MoEYS. They are mainly responsible for making sure that

education policy and strategy interventions are implemented at the school level (UNESCO, 2008). They coordinate the flow and delivery of education from national and provincial levels to the school level. While schools are not given any important administrative responsibilities, they play an important role in formulating school development plans and in trying to make sure that education services are delivered appropriately to students.

The education system in Cambodia is divided into four academic levels, namely pre-school education, primary school education, secondary school education and tertiary education. Pre-school education and early childhood education programmes are provided for children from the age of three to five years. Attendance at these schools is not compulsory. Rather, they are provided on an *ad-hoc* basis when space and staff are available (UNESCO, 2008). Primary school education lasts six years and caters for children from the age of six. Primary school education and three years of lower secondary education make up the basic education system (MoEYS, 2004). Following their completion of lower secondary school education, students have the option of continuing to upper secondary school education or of entering secondary-level vocational training programmes. A similar situation also applies at the upper secondary school education level; upon completion of upper secondary school, students can choose to enter either an academic stream or a vocational stream of higher education.

## Specific Developments in Relation to Primary School Education

The development of primary school education in post-conflict Cambodia reflects not only the social and political interests of the nation, but also aligns with the international education development agenda promoting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All, which seek to promote universal primary education. These goals are pursued in Cambodia by aiming to provide free and compulsory primary school education of good quality to all children regardless of gender and ethnicity (MoEYS, 2003). This endeavour has been reflected in the

formulation and implementation of a number of associated education initiatives. As a result, there has been remarkable progress in expanding the provision of primary school education over the past decades. More children now attend school than previously, many schools have been built, and most teachers are trained. At the same time, progress is accompanied by multiple challenges, including high student dropout rates, lack of resources, and shortage of teachers.

An overview of specific developments relating to the development of primary school education in the country will be now considered. They relate to access to education and to the quality of education.

## Access to Education

Cambodia has achieved impressive progress towards achieving universal primary school education since the launch of the *National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015* (UNESCO, 2015b). Primary school education has been expanded in all parts of the country. To this end, Cambodia received international recognition in 2006 for its Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI), which aimed to speed up the promotion of education-for-all goals and associated targets (Chhinh & Dy, 2009). This reflected the commitment of, and progress made by, the government of Cambodia in promoting education policy reforms through expanding access to education, improving the quality of education and building the capacity of individual institutions.

Net enrolment rates at primary schools increased from 84 percent in the school year of 2000–2001 to 97 percent in the school year of 2012–2013 (MoEYS, 2014b; UNESCO, 2015b). The growth has been substantial across the country, with many provinces achieving over a 90 percent net enrolment. The growth, however, has not been distributed evenly between urban and rural areas; enrolment rates have declined significantly in urban areas in recent years. The MoEYS (2014b) has reported that the net enrolment rate in urban primary schools decreased from over 90 percent in 2004–2005 to slightly below 85 percent in 2012–2013. The situation was similar in relation to the gross enrolment rate in primary schools in urban areas, which decreased to 90 percent in 2012–2013

(MoEYS, 2014b; UNESCO, 2015b). In contrast, there has been a remarkable increase in primary school enrolment in rural and remote areas of the country. Here, the primary net enrolment rate increased from 90 percent in the school year of 2004–2005 to almost 100 percent in 2012–2013 (MoEYS, 2014b).

At the same time, gender disparity in primary school education has narrowed significantly since 2000. For example, female representation in primary school net enrolment increased from 80.7 percent in the school year of 2000–2001 to 97 percent in the school year of 2012–2013 (MoEYS, 2005a, 2014b). Furthermore, this increase has taken place around the country. Also, repetition rates in primary school have decreased remarkably from 28.5 percent in the school year of 2000–2001 to 10.4 percent in the school year of 2012–2013 (MoEYS, 2014b; UNESCO, 2015b). In addition, impressive progress has been achieved in reducing the dropout rate at the primary school level. For example, the dropout rate at grade 6 decreased by 5.2 percent between the school year of 2000–2001 and 2012–2013 (MoEYS, 2014b; UNESCO, 2015b).

A number of factors have contributed to the move toward achieving universal primary school education in the country. One factor relates to the abolition of school fees through the introduction since 2000 of the school grant project. Before this, schools operated without receiving any operational funds from the government. Rather, a school's operation fund came from contributions from households and communities. On this, Bray (1999) has reported that in 1997, households and communities shared in contributing almost 60 percent of the financial and other resources required by a school. The World Bank (2005) also estimated that in Cambodia the average household expenditure per primary school student made up 26 percent of non-food spending among the poorest households and 12 percent among the richest. Hence, the abolition of informal school payments has helped to reduce the cost burden of the poor and thus increase school enrolment.

An increase in the number of primary schools has also contributed to the move toward achieving universal primary school education. New schools have been established in different parts of the country to accommodate the growing number of students and especially to facilitate access to education in rural and remote areas. According to the MoEYS (2015a),

there were 7051 public primary schools in the country in 2014–2015, 5149, of which were operated as 'child friendly schools'. These were equipped with basic school facilities, including libraries, chairs, tables, and black or white boards. The MoEYS (2014b) also reported that 80 percent of primary schools had toilets, 58.5 percent had access to water, and 50 percent had hand-washing facilities.

In addition, the MoEYS has implemented other associated programmes to help to achieve universal primary education. These include a school readiness programme for children aged five and above, an accelerated learning programme, a community-based education programme for parents, a health education programme, an education programme for slow learners, a school mapping initiative, the provision of a school meal programme, an inclusive education programme, and the promotion of a 'complete primary school programme' (grades 1–6) (MoEYS, 2014b). In order to promote access to education among various ethnic groups, the MoEYS has also implemented a multilingual education programme in 43 schools located in the five provinces, of Kratie, Mondulkiri, Preah Vihear, Ratanakiri, and Stung Treng. The programme aims to help students to move from their mother tongue to the national language so that they can proceed to further education (MoEYS, 2015b).

Nevertheless, while access to primary school education has expanded significantly, many school-aged children are still not in schools in Cambodia. The Cambodian Consortium for out-of-School Children (CCOSC) (2015) estimated that at least 57,000 primary school-aged children were not enrolled in any form of education in 2015. Many of these children lived in remote rural areas with limited access to education, poor economic circumstances, problematic family issues, ethnicity problems, and physical and intellectual disabilities (Hattori, 2009). Also, many children were not staying in school until they had completed their primary school education. In the school year of 2014–2015, for example, the primary school dropout rate was 8.3 percent. This was much higher than the intended target of 4 percent (MoEYS, 2015b). Furthermore, it appears that the primary school repetition rate has not improved greatly in the last few years, increasing from only 4.8 percent in the school year of 2013–2014 to 5.1 percent in 2014–2015 (MoEYS, 2015b).

## Quality of Education

Some progress has been made toward Goal 6 of the EFA National Plan 2003–2015, which has been focused on improving the quality of primary school education and promoting excellence in learning outcomes (MoEYS, 2003). This progress is reflected in several ways. First, it is related to improved academic qualifications amongst primary school teachers. The population of primary school teachers with only a primary level education and lower secondary level education had decreased 7.2 percent and 43.8 percent respectively between the school year of 1999–2000 and 2012–2013 (MoEYS, 2014b). On the other hand, there has been an impressive increase in the number of primary school teachers who have completed an upper secondary level education; it rose from 14.1 percent to 60.4 percent between 1999 and 2013. Also, it has been reported that the number of teachers with tertiary level education increased from 0.35 percent in the school year 1999–2000 to 4.96 percent in the school year 2012–2013 (MoEYS, 2014b).

Secondly, changes were introduced in the primary school curriculum to improve the quality of education. In 2005, the MoEYS implemented a new curriculum to reduce what were seen as disconnections between the curriculum and teaching hours (MoEYS, 2005a, 2014b). The number of teaching hours was increased to meet international standards, which was stated as being between 850 and 1000 hours per academic year. The curriculum also laid out learning outcomes that students at different grade levels were expected to achieve. To assess these outcomes, the MoEYS conducted the first national assessment at grade 3 in 2012 and grade 6 in 2013 (MoEYS, 2014b). In addition, an attempt has been made to increase the textbook-student ratio, which is three textbooks per student for grade 1–3, and four textbooks per student for grade 4–6.

While some progress has been achieved in promoting the quality of primary school education in Cambodia, numerous challenges persist that need to be tackled. Learning achievement amongst primary school students remains low. In 2006–2007, standardised tests were administered to assess the performance of primary school students in the Khmer language and in mathematics. The results showed that 40 percent of grade 3 students achieved the correct answers for Khmer language questions and

38 percent for mathematics, while 68 percent of grade 6 students achieved the correct responses for the Khmer language questions and 53 percent for mathematics (MoEYS, 2006, 2008). According to Hattori (2009), the substantial difference in learning achievement between grade 3 and grade 6 students could mean that students who managed to reach grade 6 were likely to consist mainly of those who had achieved good academic performance earlier. More recent results from the standardised tests administered in 2012–2013 showed that there was a significant decrease in achievement in both subjects, with grade 6 students achieving an average of 45.7 percent in Khmer and 43.3 percent in mathematics (MoEYS, 2016). A number of influences were identified as contributing to the decline. These included the qualifications of teachers, teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, the teaching and learning environment, the socioeconomic background of students, and attendance rates of students in school.

While the number of teachers with improved academic qualifications and pedagogical training has increased, there has been only marginal progress in the student-teacher ratio in primary schools. The student-teacher ratio decreased from 50.9 in the school year of 1999–2000 to 48.5 in the school year of 2012–2013 (MoEYS, 2014b). Also, it has been reported that the number of teaching hours delivered in primary schools are 684–760 hours per academic year (MoEYS, 2004), which falls behind the international recommendation of 850–1000 hours per annum (UNESCO, 2015a). This situation is further hampered by the informal loss of teaching hours. On this, Ang, Colin, and Chhum (2015) reported that on average in the school year of 2012–2013, 27 percent of teaching hours (50.5 days) were lost due to additional official school holidays (for example, closing schools to attend state events or sending teachers to supervise the teacher trainees examinations), teacher absence, shortened teaching sessions, and bad weather.

## Specific Developments in Relation to Primary School Leadership

The post-conflict era has not only brought about changes to education development in general, it has also promoted changes in relation to the

administration of schools. Significant efforts have been made to promote development in relation to primary school leadership. This is reflected in the formulation and implementation of education policies and strategies aimed at improving school leadership and management. Some important changes in leadership and management at the primary school level have resulted. These include the promotion of decentralised school administration and the promotion of school leadership and management training for school principals. Each of these is now examined.

## Education Decentralisation

Decentralisation has been practised in Cambodia since the 1990s, when joint initiatives between the government and development partners were undertaken to promote good governance, strengthen transparency and accountability, and improve efficiency of service delivery (Ayres, 2001; Pellini, 2005). It was not until 2002, however, that the initiative was officially launched with the first election of local commune councils. This development focused on three objectives, namely, promoting democracy, promoting good governance and promoting equity, to provide 'ordinary people' with opportunities to determine their future and encourage sustainable development, especially through the delivery of basic services (NCSC, 2005). The initiative has taken two forms: the 'political decentralisation' in which the communes have been selected to represent the democratically elected local government, and the 'deconcentration', in which functions and services of central government have been transferred to appointed officials at different administrative levels, including provincial, district and commune levels (Ayres, 2001).

The MoEYS is among other government ministries that have participated in the decentralisation process. This has resulted in the formulation and implementation of a number of associated policy and strategic plans. In 2003, the MoEYS introduced the *National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015*, which promoted decentralisation in education through an establishment of Education for All Committees at national and local levels (MoEYS, 2003). Also, the *Education Strategic Plan 2001–2005* (MoEYS, 2001a), *Education Strategic Plan 2006–2010* (MoEYS, 2005a),

*Education Strategic Plan 2009–2013* (MoEYS, 2010) and *Education Strategic Plan 2014–2018* (MoEYS, 2014a) outlined a number of strategic actions that have promoted the importance of education decentralisation at different levels of the education system.

To support the implementation of the policies and strategies outlined in the ESPs, the *Education Support Sector Programme 2002–2006* (MoEYS, 2001b) and the *Education Support Sector Programme 2006–2010* (MoEYS, 2005b) were formulated. They promoted education partnerships among relevant education stakeholders and listed associated guidelines for the decentralisation of education. In particular, they listed responsibilities and decision making autonomy to be devolved to provincial and district offices of education (MoEYS, 2005b).

The decentralisation of education in Cambodia has taken place in relation to school operation budgets, a cluster school approach and school-based management. Each of these is now considered in turn.

## School Operational Budgets

The Royal Government of Cambodia implemented nationwide financial changes to enable the realisation of its broad national development policies and priorities. In 2000, it put in place the Budget Law to improve efficiency in public expenditure (Duy et al., 2001). In the same year, the first systematic budget plan, known as the Priority Action Programme (PAP), was introduced to facilitate the distribution of operational funds to schools and other organisations (World Bank, 2005). The PAP for basic education was trialled as a pilot project in 10 provinces and in 2001 it was expanded to cover all provinces. It aimed to increase the participation of students in education at the basic education level (grade 1–9) through the abolition of school fees.

The MoEYS produced 12 PAPs, each of which was accompanied by detailed budget plans and strategies to achieve the overall aim (World Bank, 2005). Two components of the PAPs were specifically aimed at promoting the development of primary school education. PAP 1 aimed to enhance the efficiency of the education service through efficient management of education personnel. Its main strategies involved assigning

non-teaching staff to teach in classrooms, deploying teachers to disadvantaged schools, and providing incentives to school principals and teachers with outstanding performance (Keng, 2009; World Bank, 2005). In addition, PAP 1 focused on the promotion of the institutionalisation of regular on-going professional development for teachers nationwide. PAP 2 also aimed to enhance the quality and efficiency of primary school education through the abolition of school fees and the provision of an operational budget for all primary schools (Keng, 2009).

PAP budgets were allocated to each school in the form of grants, which were of two main types. The first type relates to the school level. Grants were of 500,000 Riels (approximately USD125) per primary school and 1,000,000 Riels (about USD250) per lower secondary school (World Bank, 2005). The second type was based on the number of students in a school. Accordingly, 6000 Riels (about USD1.5) were granted for each primary school student and 13,600 Riels (almost USD3.40) for each lower secondary student (World Bank, 2005). However, the amount could vary, depending on the school location. Primary schools received additional PAP funds for teaching students in remedial classes.

To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing public budget management system, the government also implemented a new budget programme in 2007 called the Programme-Based Budget (PB), to replace the PAP. The PB is similar to the PAP in that the budget allocated to schools is based on the number of students, school size and geographical location. In 2014, the budget allocated to primary schools ranged from 800,000 Riels (approximately USD195) to 1,200,000 Riels (approximately USD 295), and each primary school student yielded from 8000 Riels (approximately USD 2) to 12,000 Riels (approximately USD 3) (MoEYS, 2014c).

The introduction of financial changes in education reflected the commitment of the government to promote decentralisation in the sector. Greater autonomy had been given to central, provincial and district offices of education for disbursing and accounting for the education budget (UNESCO, 2011). Also, with the provision of a school operation budget, each school has become more autonomous in such matters as maintenance of school buildings and purchase of education materials (Shoraku, 2008; World Bank, 2005). The school operational budget is

disbursed to the school on exchange of the annual school development plan and monthly expenditure plans, which have to be submitted to the district and provincial offices of education.

The implementation of the changes in education financing also reflected the commitment of the government, donors and development partners to promoting the key education policies of improving access to education, enhancing the quality of education, and strengthening the institutional and individual capacity of the education system at all levels (Chhinh & Dy, 2009; Ratcliffe et al., 2009; World Bank, 2005). In addition, it reflected the promotion of political unity and leadership in education planning and development. In particular, it promoted close collaboration between the MoEF and MoEYS government ministries in defining and aligning education development priorities with resources (Ratcliffe et al., 2009).

## Cluster School Approach

A cluster of schools refers to schools that are grouped together for administrative and education purposes (Bray, 1987). It is often made up of six to seven schools, depending on geographical location and accessibility. At the centre is a 'core school' responsible for the administration of activities within the cluster (Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015). This school is often well established, having a resource centre, library, and teaching resources available to the other teachers within the same cluster. It is connected to 'satellite schools'. In some locations, these schools can be further linked to 'annex schools' which do not have a complete grade cycle (Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015).

A cluster school approach was introduced in Cambodia in the 1990s as a national strategy to enhance both the quality of primary school education and access (Bredenberg, 2002; Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015). It was initially implemented by the MoEYS, with assistance from UNICEF and Save the Children Norway. This commenced in 1992 as a pilot project in some provinces. It was expanded to all provinces in 1995. The number of cluster schools increased rapidly from 760 in the school year of 2000–2001 to 1148 in the school year of 2010–2011 (Bredenberg,

2002; Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015). The number of schools in each cluster can vary, depending on the geographical location and accessibility of schools. According to Pellini and Bredenberg (2015), on average a cluster consists of 5.9 primary schools, including a core school, satellite schools and an annex school.

The cluster school approach in Cambodia has been implemented with the help of school cluster committees established at different education levels (Pellini, 2005). The National Cluster School Committee, established in 1992 has the responsibility to oversee the expansion and operation of school clusters nationwide. The provincial offices of education are assigned to oversee the establishment of provincial, district and local cluster school committees (Pellini, 2005). The local cluster school committee is stationed at the core school and is made up of the school director of the core school, the school directors of satellite schools, technical teacher leaders, a monk, the village head, the commune chief, the head of the Village Development Committee, and members of the School Support Committee (Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015). Its main tasks are to assist in the formulation and implementation of plans in the cluster, to engage community members in school activities, and to liaise with local authorities and the District Office of Education (DOE).

The cluster school approach has made significant contributions to the promotion of decentralisation in education and efficiency in primary school education. It promotes accountability in the utilisation of financial resources and enables local stakeholders to get involved in school management processes (Bredenberg, 2002; Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015). Within the cluster practice, the school budget is locally planned, and thus can reflect the needs of local education stakeholders. It can also help to reduce the student dropout rate and repetition rate in primary schools (Bredenberg, 2002). Furthermore, it can help to increase participation of parents and community members in school management.

While the school cluster approach has made positive contributions to the development of primary school education in the country, its implementation has been problematic. One significant constraint is that of inadequate resources (Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015). The cluster schools have received little or no support from the government in relation to

expenditure associated with meetings, travel, and supplies. For example, it has been reported that a great number of school clusters have been established with the support of donors, mainly through project initiatives. In the school year of 2000/2001, at least 43 percent of school clusters were operating with external support (Bredenberg, 2002; Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015). This support has often been focused on building the capacity of school stakeholders, improving the school environment, supplying instructional materials, promoting community participation, and improving students' health and nutrition (Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015).

Another challenge is related to the disjuncture that can exist between school cluster structures and the administrative structure of education (Bredenberg, 2002; Pellini & Bredenberg, 2015). While the Provincial Cluster School Committees are established with a responsibility to oversee and assist in the implementation of Cluster School Committees at the lower level, they appear to have done little to improve the operation of school clusters. On this matter, Pellini and Bredenberg (2015) have stated that the Provincial Cluster School Committees and District Cluster School Committees do not communicate well with each other. Many lack appropriate technical knowledge and skills (Bredenberg, 2002).

## School-Based Management

While school-based management had existed in the Cambodian education system for many decades, it was not formally introduced until 2002. It was proposed as a strategy to promote decentralisation in education. It has been facilitated through the creation of a school support committee (SSC) in order to enable participation of school-level stakeholders in school management. The expected outcome, it is held, should be a smooth, transparent, accountable and effective education process (MoEYS, 2012).

Each individual primary school is required to establish its own SSC, whose membership can vary, depending on the school size. To facilitate its establishment and its operation, the MoEYS (2012) issued guidelines.

These indicate that an SSC should be composed of the following education stakeholders:

- One honorary chair who could be a representative of local authorities, head monk or private donor;
- One-to-three advisors who could be a school director, retired education official, elder, or community representative;
- One chair who could be a retired education official, layperson, private donor, community representative, or representative of parents of students;
- One-to-three deputy chairs who could be a retired education official, pagoda committee, layperson, community representative, parents, or students; and
- Two-to-four members who could be a retired education official, pagoda committee, layperson, private donor, community representative, representative, or parent of student. (MoEYS, 2012)

These individuals are selected through an election which takes place a month before the start of a new school year (MoEYS, 2012). An election committee is established to oversee the election process. The guidelines also state that females are encouraged to participate in the committee.

It is through an SSC that involvement of local-level education stakeholders in schools has been promoted. An SSC is expected to carry out a wide range of responsibilities, including taking part in the formulation and implementation of school development plans, promoting school enrolment and student learning, generating and mobilising budget management, being involved in school construction and maintenance, participating in school extra-curricular activities, helping to make the school environment safe and friendly, and strengthening links between schools and communities (MoEYS, 2012). In reality, however, members of SSCs do not carry out all of these responsibilities. In this connection, studies have shown that while involvement of SSC members in school management has increased over the past years, it is still relatively low (Nguon, 2011; No & Heng, 2015). Members only participate in some of the expected activities, including school construction and maintenance, the formulation of the school development plan, the promotion of school enrolment, the promotion of a safe and friendly school environment, and fund-generating activities (Nguon, 2011; No & Heng, 2015).

## School Leadership and Management Development and Support

In recent years, significant efforts have been made to improve school leadership and management in Cambodia. These have involved the implementation of school leadership and management projects aimed at developing the capacity of school-level stakeholders and especially school principals in an attempt to enhance education outcomes. In 1997, the MoEYS, in collaboration with UNESCO/UNDP, administered a school leadership training programme for a small number of school principals (John, 2007). The programme only lasted for a short period and little is known about its outcome.

In 2002, the MoEYS introduced a mandatory management training programme for school principals operating at different levels of the education system (Iv & John, 2011; John, 2007). This training lasts about 20 days and is provided for school leaders after they have been appointed as principals or deputy principals. The aim is to develop capacity in school leadership and management. The training modules and associated materials have been developed to facilitate the training process and are distributed to school principals as reference material. They deal with a wide range of school leadership and management matters, including school administration, roles, duties and responsibilities of school principals, deputy principals and secretaries, leadership and management, school development planning, effective communication, and teaching and learning (MoEYS, 2009, 2011).

While this mandatory management training programme has helped school principals to develop some understanding of school administration and thus do a better job than previously, it has little focus on leadership development. According to Iv and John (2011), the training has taught school principals to comply with what is required by offices of education, with minimal emphasis on leadership development. They emphasised that while there has been some mention of leadership in the training, it is not referred to in relation to teaching and learning.

In 2005, a school leadership development programme was implemented as a sub-component of the Cambodian Education Sector Support Project (CESSP). This was funded by the World Bank (Iv & John, 2011;

John, 2007). The programme was provided for key education stakeholders at different levels of the education system, namely, the central, provincial, district, and school levels. An associated intervention involved drawing on a combination of theory and practice to realise the aims of the programme. This included the development of four leadership training modules, training of staff at the provincial and district offices of education, the establishment of province-based leadership support teams, training of trainers, training of school principals (primary and secondary school principals), and providing school support by the Leadership Support Team (LST) (Iv & John, 2011).

The leadership development programme has had a significant impact on the way school principals manage their schools. Iv and John (2011), for example, have stated:

> We see school directors working much harder than before the programme; showing up to school every day; being much more visible outside their offices; working with teachers in technical group meetings; doing more and more formal and informal classroom observations; giving feedback that is more helpful to teachers; building much more positive relationships with teachers and community members. We know most of them have a vision for their schools and some are better than others at getting the kind of support and resources to fulfil those visions. (p. 2)

Also, the leadership development programme has had a positive impact on staff at district and provincial offices of education, who paid more visits to schools than previously and offered constructive feedback to school principals and teachers (Iv & John, 2011). Furthermore, it has been reported that discussing the importance of leadership has been part of conversations held among education policy makers. Associated with this was an attempt to integrate the mandatory management training programme with the leadership development programme, and to initiate a pre-service preparation programme for school principals (Iv & John, 2011).

Leadership for school improvement and effectiveness is now a key strategy of the government's teacher policy (MoEYS, 2013). The *Teacher Policy Action Plan 2015* (MoEYS, 2015a) outlines a number of associated

action plans to promote the leadership capacities of school principals and teachers. These relate to conducting a baseline study on school principals, developing school principal standards, formulating a school management handbook, organising training for school principals, and creating a school principals' association (MoEYS, 2015a).

## Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the first and second research aims of the study being reported in this book. The first research aim sought to generate an understanding of the historical background to primary school leadership in Cambodia from the colonial period until 1998. Seven political regimes were examined. They were the pre-colonial period (prior to 1863), the French protectorate and colonial period (1863–1953), the Sihanouk regime period (1953–1970), the Khmer Republic regime (1970–1975), the Khmer Rouge Regime (1975–1979), the Vietnamese Occupation period (1979–1989), and the UNTAC and coalition government period (1989–1998). The examination revealed how political and social reforms brought about changes in rules and regulations that govern the education system in the country and how these changes influenced policies and practices in primary school leadership and management in the country.

The second research aim of the study sought to generate an understanding of the developments that have taken place in relation to primary school leadership in Cambodia since 1998. Four areas of education development were considered. First, there was an overview of the broad context within which primary school education development has taken place. Here, key policies and strategies that have guided the development of primary school education were taken into account. Secondly, there was a description of the governance and administrative structures of the education system. Thirdly, it highlighted specific developments in relation to primary school education. Fourthly, it examined specific developments in relation to leadership at the primary school level in the country.

Attention now turns to the third research question, namely, to generate an understanding of the issues that are of current concern to primary school leaders in Cambodia and the strategies adopted by them to deal

with those issues. For this purpose, results are first presented in Chap. 5, on the issues that are currently of concern to primary school leaders as a result of Cambodia being a developing country, and the strategies they adopt to deal with those issues. Chapter 6 then presents results on the issues that are currently of concern to leaders at the primary school level that arise from the fact that Cambodia is a post-new war country, and on how the leaders deal with those issues.

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# 5

# Cambodia as a Developing Country: Current Concerns of School Leaders

## Introduction

The previous chapter of this book outlined both the historical background to leadership in education in Cambodia and recent leadership developments in the country. This chapter and the next one consider issues currently of concern to Cambodian primary school leaders. The present chapter examines this matter in relation to three sets of issues that relate to Cambodia's status as a developing country. They are issues relating to administration, to teaching and learning, and to curriculum. The next chapter then considers issues that exist as a result of Cambodia's status as a post-new war country and how this compounds the situation for leaders at the primary school level.

## Issues Relating to Administration

A significant issue faced by school principals as a result of Cambodia being a developing country relates to school administration. On this, school principals in the study highlighted a number of sub-issues. These


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are lack of professional preparation and development, poor working conditions, financial constraints, lack of community involvement, and natural disasters.

## Lack of Professional Preparation and Development for School Leaders

While there is growing recognition that leadership is different from teaching, school leaders in many countries, and particularly in developing countries, often receive no formal leadership preparation and development when moving from being a teacher to being a school principal (Bush, 2011). This is particularly true of Cambodia where, for a long time, no official formal leadership training was required for new school principals. Rather, principals were frequently appointed on the basis of a successful teaching record, as opposed to leadership capacity. Accordingly, it is not surprising that one of the sub-issues identified by principals at the primary school level in Cambodia regarding professional preparation and development is the lack of professional support.

In Cambodia, leadership appointment at the primary school level follows a traditional approach, in which little importance is given to leadership potential and qualifications. In relation to primary school leadership appointments, the MoEYS (2014b) identified six criteria that should be met. They are education qualification, knowledge of a specialised field, a relevant skills set, good personal characteristics, working experience, and ability to perform the job. Nevertheless, even though primary school principals are required to have attained at least a basic level of education, this is sometimes not the case. This is because most senior school principals in Cambodia became teachers shortly after the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979. Not only did they have limited education attainment, they also lacked pedagogical support.

In contrast, most junior primary school principals have better education qualifications and have received pedagogical preparation at provincial teacher training colleges (PTTCs). The duration of the pre-service training received depends on when one began teaching. In this connection, Benveniste, Marshall, and Araujo (2008) found that primary school

teachers in Cambodia who started teaching before 1984 had less than one year of pre-service training, those who began between 1985 and 1990 had one year of training, and those who commenced after 1991 had two years of training.

The study being reported here revealed that, in practice, three criteria are commonly used when making leadership appointments at the primary school level in Cambodia and that these do not correspond with the official criteria. The first common criterion relates to seniority. Some principals were appointed after being teachers for a long time. Others climbed up the ranks from classroom teacher to head-subject teacher, then to deputy principal, and finally to school principal. School principals interviewed considered each stage as having been a mentoring period when they had a chance to develop their understanding through observation of the work of their superiors. For many, this mentoring and the style of school leadership adopted by them, they argued, were shaped by whether their former school principal was competent or not.

Another criterion commonly used in the recruitment of primary school principals relates to having a successful teaching record. Some teachers have been appointed to be school principals because they were competent teachers or because they had good teaching records, even though they had no relevant experience relating to school leadership and management. They hold that the adoption of such a recruitment approach seems to be based on an assumption that effective teachers can become effective school principals. Also, some teachers were appointed to be principals because there was nobody else who could take the position. Such a situation is to be found, in particular, in small rural and remote schools where there is often a critical shortage of teachers.

The third criterion used in the recruitment of primary school principals relates to being part of a social network. Although this is not widely recognised, it can be influential. The participants in the study were in agreement that some teachers have been appointed to be principals because of their connections to a political group, or to an influential individual. One school principal commented on the matter as follows:

> In principle, a school principal is appointed from being a deputy principal from within the school. However, it happened that the network had an

> influence on the appointment process in a way that a school principal was taken from here and there.

Principals appointed in this manner can manage the school in a way that closely follows the complex requirements of the central education office.

In addition to the lack of pre-professional preparation, the results of the study indicate that principals at the primary school level in Cambodia can often lack continuing professional support following their appointment. One school principal commented on this situation in the following way:

> I have not received any development in relation to my job as a school director in this school since my appointment. Many school directors who were appointed at the same time with me seem to lack the opportunities for continuing professional development. I think the selection for professional development is based on years of work experience and education qualifications.

Also, the indication is that if in-service professional support is available, it can take one or more of three forms. The first form is the mandatory management training which was introduced by the MoEYS in 2002. This training aims to prepare school principals for their job after they are appointed, and usually lasts between 15 and 30 days. The training focuses on administrative matters required by the central office of education rather than on leadership development. As a consequence, the result may be the creation of functional managers rather than leaders. Furthermore, this training is not made available to all principals at the primary school level throughout the nation. Indeed, some principals have received no such training since they commenced being principals. This is particularly true for school principals in rural and remote areas.

The second form of professional support available for principals at the primary school level in Cambodia is the joint training offered by the MoEYS and non-government organisations (NGOs). This kind of training is frequently part of a project supported by NGOs and can be short-lived and irregular. Also, there is usually no continuation of the training when the project ends. Furthermore, the training is often concentrated

on issues associated with broad change in education rather than on leadership development.

The third form of professional support relates to training organised solely by NGOs. This training is similar to that mentioned above. It focuses on general education reform and little reference is made to the importance of leadership capacity building. Furthermore, it is frequently made available only to a very limited number of principals.

Because of the lack of professional preparation and development, many school principals, and especially newly appointed ones, are not ready to assume their responsibilities. They know little about their role, except what they learned from observing principals in the school in which they were teaching. They tend to rely almost solely on their common sense and experience to deal with their day-to-day work. As a result, they encounter a number of major challenges in their roles, including ones related to financial management, staff management and student management.

## Poor Working Conditions

There was a broad consensus among the school principals interviewed that their working conditions are inappropriate. Most reported a lack of appropriate physical facilities for their work. Some of them use a classroom as a regular school office, often with someone teaching in the room at the same time. This arrangement compounds a regular problem of shortage of classrooms.

Some school principals also reported a difficulty in getting physical access to their schools. This can be particularly the case with regard to rural and remote schools, where the conditions of the roads connecting home to school are often poor. Principals in such schools frequently do not live in the community in which they work and they have to travel a long distance every day. Sometimes they are unable to reach the school even by motorbike during the rainy season because the roads become muddy and flooded. One school principal commented on this situation as follows:

> One main problem facing our school relates to poor road conditions. We cannot reach our school during the rainy season because all roads become

> severely flooded. We have to use a taxi boat during this period as the level of water is as high as our waist. It is costly to use a taxi boat. A round trip can cost around 10,000 Riels. (USD 2.5)

Poor road conditions can also pose difficulties for principals in rural and remote schools when trying to attend meetings or workshops at the District or Provincial Offices of Education.

Another issue faced by school principals regarding their working conditions relates to perceived inappropriate salaries and incentives. Overall, school principals in the study agreed that they are poorly remunerated for their work. In Cambodia, the monthly salary of a principal at the primary school level is between USD100 and USD150. Participants considered the salary insufficient for them to live a decent life and support a family. On this, one principal said:

> My salary as a principal is less than that of teachers, but I have to work both morning and afternoon shifts. I have to take overall responsibility for the operation of the school. The problem was raised during the education congress in Kampot province last year. It was proposed that if principals work all day, they should be better compensated.

School principals do receive some benefits as incentives to take on challenging posts. These include free housing and a financial bonus for working in a disadvantaged area, and a few principals in rural and remote school settings who participated in the study acknowledged they received these benefits. However, they were not available to other school principals. This situation can add to a perception that there is a lack of recognition of the achievements and hard work of school principals.

Poor remuneration forces some principals to seek additional sources of income to complement their salary. Having a second job, however, can have a negative effect on one's performance. In particular, principals can find it difficult to find a balance between their school work and their second job. Occasionally, some of them are absent from school because they are busy working at another job. Others are sometimes absent from school because they are unable to pay basic transportation costs.

## Financial Constraints

The Royal Government of Cambodia, as has already been noted, introduced systemic school finance reforms in 2000. The first finance reform was the Priority Action Programme (PAPs). This programme was piloted in 10 provinces in 2000 and was expanded nationwide in 2001 (World Bank, 2005). The aim was to enhance the quality of education and improve access to education by eliminating school fees (MoEYS, 2005). Following this, the government implemented a programme in 2007 called the Programme-Based Budget (PB) to replace the PAP. The aim was to improve the effectiveness of the existing school finance programme and to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of education services.

In implementing the PB, school principals in the study confronted a number of issues. Four in particular have been identified. They relate to pre-determined allocation of finance, lack of financial support, irregularity in the distributions of finance, and complex financial processes.

### The Pre-determined Allocation of Finance

The first financial issue confronted by primary school principals in Cambodia relates to pre-determined allocation of finance. The PB is the sole funding programme for school operations provided by the government. It deals with various types of expenditure, each of which is divided into sub-expenditures. A specific sub-account code is assigned to each type of expenditure within the financial structure, each of which is further divided into various 'chapters'. Each 'chapter' has its account code and sub-account code. A specific amount of the budget is allocated by the MoEYS to each 'chapter', account and sub-account.

The pre-determination of the budget allocation provides for only minimal flexibility for school-level stakeholders in deciding how the budget should be utilised to meet their school's needs. On this, one principal in the study made the following comment:

> It is difficult to utilise the PB to meet our school needs as it is already pre-determined. For example, we are not allowed to use the budget to purchase

any major furniture (table, chairs or fences) for school, but we can use it to repair school buildings.

Such a financial practice neglects to take into consideration that different schools have different areas in need of improvement. As a result, many schools' needs are left unmet.

## Lack of Financial Support

Another financial issue faced by school principals is the limited financial support available to them. The budget given to a school is calculated on the basis of the number of students enrolled, regardless of school size and particular needs. The budget amount provided for each primary school student is from 9000 Riels (USD2.25) to 12,000 Riels (USD3) per school year (Ministry of Economy & Finance, 2013). Each school also receives a school operation budget, ranging from 800,000 Riels (USD200) to 1,200,000 Riels (USD300) per school year. Any variation in the budget amount allocated to each student and to school operations depends primarily upon the school's location and the number of classes within it (Ministry of Economy & Finance, 2013).

The budget allocation policy means there is a difference between the financial support received by larger and by smaller schools. Schools with a larger population of students generally receive a larger amount of financial support per student, whereas schools with a smaller population of students obtain a lesser amount per student. Therefore, it is held, larger schools have a better prospect of making progress academically with their students. However, all school principals in the study reported that the financial support allocated to their schools is inadequate for a school's needs over a school year, regardless of size.

A school's budget allocation mainly supports its pedagogical operations. Only minimal amounts are allocated to other aspects of a school's operations, such as school repair and maintenance, school environment improvement, extra-curricular activities, and professional development. One school principal commented on this situation thus:

> One problem with the school operation budget is that we have to spend it according to what is already decided. The budget is set into different accounts and subaccounts, each of which has its limitation. In principle, we cannot spend more than the amount set in each account and subaccount. This limits our ability to utilise the budget to meet our actual needs in the school. For example, less than 40,000 Riels (USD 10) are allocated to water usage, but we usually spend twice of this amount of the budget on water usage.

School principals in the study being reported here also recognised the importance of another financial programme, namely, the School Improvement Grant (SIG), in their schools. This programme is supported by the government of Sweden and aims to improve the quality of learning in the schools. The SIG regulations also give school-level stakeholders flexibility in managing the money available under the scheme to meet the needs of their schools.

School principals indicated that SIG operates better than the existing government-financial programme. However, there is concern regarding its sustainability. It is expected that the funding will be cut off in the near future and that this may have a significant detrimental impact on school improvement.

Schools also receive funding from other sources, including community members, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), local and foreign donors, and self-generated income. School principals acknowledge that community members can play an important role in contributing financial assistance for school development. Such assistance is sought when there is a need to construct new buildings, to create new gardens or fences, and to hold an important event at the school. It is usually done through a fundraising ceremony and can be organised on a regular basis through funding from NGOs and overseas visitors, although this may be short-lived.

## Irregularity in the Distribution of Finance

The third financial issue identified that is confronted by Cambodian primary school principals relates to irregularity in the distribution of finance.

Officially, the budget is meant to be distributed to schools in four rounds of payment per school year, namely, in January, April, July and October (Department of Finance, 2011). In reality, however, the distributions can be irregular, especially in remote and rural areas. The first payment is meant to be distributed to a school in January, but it frequently is not received until February or March. Such irregularity in financial distribution can have a detrimental impact on school operations, particularly early in the school year when a large financial sum is required for getting the school underway.

There are also cases of schools not receiving all four payments due over the duration of the school year. Furthermore, school principals are often not informed why some of the payments are missing. Such cases are usually found in schools in rural and remote areas where the distance from the school to the District Office of Education (DoE) or the Provincial Office of Education (PoE) is long and where road conditions are bad.

One strategy adopted by school principals to deal with the irregularity in financial distribution is that of using professional and personal networks. As indicated already, a huge amount of the school budget is needed when the school year starts, but the budget frequently arrives late. To deal with this, many school principals use their professional and personal reputations to help obtain all required materials and facilities to support the school's operations and have payments deferred. This means that they may, for example, develop a relationship with a local stationery shop where they can obtain the necessary resources and pay later. Some principals also use their own money to pay for what needs to be purchased and are reimbursed when the school receives its budget allocation.

## Complex Financial Processes

The fourth issue regarding school financing identified by school principals relates to the complexity of the financial process involved. Budgeting involves a bottom-up approach which requires that school-level stakeholders (principals, teachers and representatives of the SSC) work together to develop a school development plan along with a school budget plan before the commencement of a new school year. Officially, the

development of the school budget plan is designed to encourage participation by relevant school-stakeholders, including principals, teachers and representatives of the SSC. In reality, however, representatives of the SSC tend to depend upon principals and teachers to develop the plans. This can be because they believe that principals and teachers have a better understanding of school operations and budgeting issues, and therefore are best able to plan for school budgeting.

After the budget plan is completed at the school, it has to be submitted to the DoE, where it is double-checked for errors. When errors are found, which is frequently the case, the budget plan may be returned to the school for adjustments. Many principals, like the newly appointed ones who participated in the study reported here, have difficulty in drawing up the school budget because they have no previous budgeting experience and may have received limited or no training relating to budget planning and management.

Making adjustments based on what is advised creates additional work for school principals because they have to go through the plan again. Also, little support is given to them to assist them in correcting errors. For this reason, some school principals in the study being reported here explained that they sometimes have to make several adjustments before the budget plan is accepted and approved by the DoE. Some also expressed feeling frustrated when making adjustments. Furthermore, collecting the budget plan from the DoE to make adjustments involves transportation costs for principals, who often have little money to spare. This is especially true in the case of those located in rural and remote areas.

After the plan is verified by the DoE, it is subsequently submitted to the PoE. The PoE consolidates all of the budget plans. It then submits them to the department responsible for them at the Central Office of Education.

Because of these challenges, school principals in the study called for financial change that would give them flexibility in utilising the budget to meet the needs of their schools. Also, they suggested that this change should involve introducing the means to enable the budget to be distributed to a school on time. In doing so, they agreed that school-level stakeholders should be informed and supported in introducing the proposed change.

## Lack of Community Involvement in Education

Recent education change in Cambodia has involved the adoption of a gradual decentralisation approach which is reflected in the *Education Strategic Plan 2006–2010* (MoEYS, 2005), *Education Strategic Plan 2009–2013* (MoEYS, 2010) and *Education Strategic Plan 2014–2018* (MoEYS, 2014a). This approach places a particular emphasis on the importance of school-level stakeholders' involvement, and especially that of community members and parents of children, in education. It takes into consideration that school-level stakeholders, including principals, teachers, parents of students and community members, have a good understanding of the needs of their school and the learners, and can respond to these efficiently. Certain aspects of authority in education management have, as a result, been shifted from the Central Office of Education to the school level through the establishment of school support committees (SSC).

Each individual primary school examined in the study being reported here has its own SSC, which is composed of various school-level stakeholders. They can be commune/*sangkat* chiefs, school principals, monks, village chiefs, elders, and parents of students. The number of committee members, however, differs from school to school, depending upon the size of the school and its geographical location. For instance, smaller schools have a smaller number of committee members than have those of larger schools, and schools in remote areas have fewer committee members than have schools in rural and urban areas.

Based on the official guidelines on the establishment and functioning of school support committees at the primary school level in Cambodia (MoEYS, 2012), an SSC should consist of an honorary chair, one-to-three advisors, a chairperson, one-to-three deputy chairperson and two-to-four members. Women are encouraged to be part of the committees. In reality, however, very few women participate.

The expectation is that members of an SSC should be recruited through an election mechanism which should take place a month before a new school year commences (MoEYS, 2012). An election committee is established with a composition of different members, including existing committee members and teachers. In practice, members of the committee can

be recruited through both election and appointment mechanisms. The latter approach is common in small rural and remote schools where the involvement of community members in the work of the schools is very limited. Representatives are frequently recruited based on their reputation and the influence they have in the community.

It is through their SSC that representatives of community members can have an influence on education by taking on a wide range of responsibilities. According to the MoEYS (2012), members of an SSC should be (i) participating in the formulation and implementation of school development plans; (ii) cooperating with the school to collect and enrol children in school; (iii) monitoring learning of students through strengthening interactions with parents of students and school principals and teachers; (iv) generating funding support and mobilising funding resources; (v) taking part in school construction, repair and maintenance; (vi) contributing to life-skill programmes at school; (vii) preventing irregularities from happening inside and outside of the school; and (viii) strengthening and expanding capacity and awareness on school development to the community members. However, the results of the study being reported here indicate that, in practice, members of SSCs do not always act accordingly.

Members across the participating schools did indicate that they take part in revenue generation to support a school's operations. This is undertaken through organising fund-raising events and seeking financial contributions from wealthy community members or donor organisations within and outside the community. They provide valuable opportunities to raise funds in urban and in some rural areas where the socio-economic situation of the community members is conducive to such action. In addition, members of SSCs often take part in the formulation and implementation of school development plans. They also engage in monitoring the learning of students through participating in enrolment campaigns, building close communication between schools and the parents of students, and keeping the school environment safe and friendly.

Nevertheless, school principals in the study indicated that involvement may still be somewhat limited. First, there can be a lack of participation by members of the committee at school meetings. According to the MoEYS (2012), members of SSCs are supposed to hold meetings at least

three times in a school year. The first meeting should take place one week before the school year starts, the second meeting should be held at the end of semester one, and the last meeting should be organised at the end of the school year. However, some members of SSCs attend school meetings only once or twice a year. Also, in some rural and remote schools, members of the committee are often absent from school meetings.

Secondly, members of SSCs sometimes rely upon school principals and teachers to decide on matters to do with the school budget and the formulation of school development plans. In fact, what they often do is simply acknowledge the arrival of the budget at the school and its expenditure, and rarely try to influence spending in order to bring about school improvement. Also, they often make only a limited contribution to the development of school plans. This, perhaps, is because they have only a limited knowledge of school management; most members of the committees investigated in the study being reported here had received only a limited formal education. In fact, in a study conducted in 2011 and involving 715 SSC members in Cambodia, Nguon (2011) found that 83 percent of committee members had only received a primary school education, while the remainder had only studied as far as the secondary school level.

## Natural Disasters

Cambodia is a tropical country characterised by a low-lying central plain. The country is prone to natural disasters, especially from floods and storms. In 2000, it was severely affected by the Mekong flood, which caused significant damage to socio-economic and physical structures throughout the country. It was estimated that 3.4 million people were affected, with 347 fatalities (Economic Institute of Cambodia, 2008). Schools, hospitals, houses and pagodas were badly damaged, with a total estimated loss of USD 161 million (National Committee for Disaster Management, 2002). The country was hit by another flood the following year, causing huge destruction and loss of life. Accordingly, it is not surprising that one of the significant issues faced by primary school leaders in Cambodia relates to flood management.

It is clear from the results of the study being reported here that floods affect many schools located along the lower part of the Mekong River and the coastal area. A large number of schools here were constructed on low land without adequate flood resistant features. This can have an impact on schools in many ways. The first relates to delays in the learning schedule. Although the period when schools are affected by a flood can vary depending on geographical location, it normally occurs between July and November. This means that it can disrupt the school calendar as the academic year starts early in November and ends in August. This disruption, in turn, can slow down student progress towards completing the curriculum laid down by the MoEYS for a school year.

The second impact that a flood can have on primary school education relates to difficulty in gaining access to schools. Some schools are closed during the flood season because they cannot be reached by vehicle or on foot. Other schools may remain open during the affected period because students can use boats to reach them. This can, however, bring its own dangers for children, especially when the level of water is high. Also, it can impose another financial burden, as they may have to travel on a fare-charging boat.

There are indications from the study that floods may also contribute to student attrition. School principals interviewed reported that there is often high absenteeism among students at the start of the school year and also dropout. This is because it is both difficult and dangerous for students to travel.

Flooding can also damage school facilities. School principals interviewed indicated that they often have to relocate tables, chairs, textbooks and instructional materials to try to ensure that they do not become damaged by water. This, however, can be difficult because there is often limited space in the classrooms. One school principal commented on these circumstances as follows:

> One of the main problems we face in this school is flood which occurs every year. It has an effect upon the school facilities including tables, chairs and especially textbooks and teaching aids because the level of water is high and there is limited space to relocate those facilities. Also, when the flood is gone, we have to deal with mud and dirt left by the flood. We have to

clean all classrooms immediately; otherwise, the mud becomes dry and it can be more difficult to clean.

Overall, the damage caused to school facilities can have a negative impact on the national budget because of the amount required to pay for school rehabilitation. For example, the Mekong flood in 2000 damaged almost 2000 schools and directly affected between 0.3 and 0.4 million students (MoEYS, 2000). The rehabilitation of the damaged schools cost approximately USD 16.8 million (MoEYS, 2000).

Dealing with floods can be challenging for school principals. Several strategies are commonly adopted by them. They inform relevant education officers of the flooding situation in their schools. Another practice entails involving relevant school-level stakeholders. This means that school principals seek cooperation from teachers, students, parents of students and community members in protecting school facilities from flooding and in reconstructing the school following the flood. The cooperation can be in the form of labour, materials and money.

## Issues Relating to Teaching and Learning

The second broad theme regarding the issues faced by school principals as a result of Cambodia being a developing country relates to teaching and learning. A number of sub-issues were identified by school principals in relation to this theme. Six in particular stand out. They are limited professional development for teachers, inappropriate payment and incentives for teachers, limited teaching-learning materials, lack of school infrastructure, lack of parent involvement, and student dropout.

### Limited Professional Development for Teachers

When the reconstruction of education began following the collapse of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, the government of Cambodia confronted the challenge of recruiting thousands of teachers to meet the needs of the education system. This was because only a small number of educated people were in the country. The government adopted a voluntary mecha-

nism of appointment, meaning that any literate person could be recruited as a teacher if he or she wanted to be one (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005). Those appointed teachers whose education attainment was limited received a short period of training before they were posted to their teaching locations.

In the early 1990s, the government of Cambodia implemented large scale training programmes that aimed to enhance the quality of classroom instruction and upgrade the general education level of the appointed teachers (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005). Those who completed the programmes became certified teachers. Teacher training centres were also re-established to prepare future teachers. Furthermore, the education requirement for admittance to a programme of preparation for primary school teaching was changed from seven years of general education plus one year of pre-service training (7+1), to eight years of general education plus two years of pre-service training (8+2). This was changed again in 1994 to eleven years of general education plus two years of pre-service training (11+2) (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005). In 1998, the entry requirement was changed once more, this time to twelve years of general education and two years of pre-service training.

While many current teachers received pre-service training, the results of the study being reported here indicate that they often lack opportunities for continuing professional development. The school principals interviewed stated that some teachers in their schools received limited professional support following the commencement of their teaching, while others have had none. Also, when professional support is available, it can be of one or more types. The first type relates to introducing teachers to general education changes. Often, such professional support is not focused on building the capacity of teachers, as indicated by one principal's comment:

> The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) has recently implemented a wide range of education reform, but little attention has been given to developing the capacity of teachers. I have not seen any programme that aims to prepare teachers to implement the reform.

He concluded by saying that teachers receive little professional support to improve their teaching ability.

The second type of professional support relates to developing the capacity of teachers by orientating them to textbook changes and introducing them to new teaching approaches. Related professional support programmes are usually held at the provincial and school level, and last about a week. For example, workshops on textbook change frequently take place at the provincial level and are attended by the lead subject teachers, who are expected to replicate at the school level what they learn. It appears, however, that teachers in Phnom Penh and other provincial areas have better opportunities for such continuing professional development than their counterparts in rural and remote settings have.

## Inappropriate Payment and Incentives for Teachers

Like governments in certain other developing countries, the government of Cambodia has committed itself to increasing the living standard of its public servants, and especially its teachers. This commitment was made clear in the *National Strategic Development Plan 2006–2010* (Royal Government of Cambodia, 2005), which states that the government will continue to gradually increase the salaries of civil servants by 10–15 percent per year to improve their living standards to an appropriate level. Consequently, the initial base salary of primary school teachers was increased to 176,000 Riels (approximately USD 44) in 2007 (Benveniste et al., 2008). This base salary is accompanied by a range of supplements, such as a seniority allowance, a family allowance, a special incentives' allowance, a functional allowance, and a pedagogical allowance.

Notwithstanding the increase in the salary scale, there are indications from the study being reported here that Cambodian primary school teachers consider that they are poorly paid. The salary, they claim, is insufficient for teachers to cover their expenses, including the cost of transportation, food, and daily activities. Some teachers can generate additional income through teaching remedial classes, double shift classes, multigrade classes and private classes. Others take on a second job; the most common second jobs that teachers have are running a small business, farming, engaging in animal husbandry, and motorcycle driving as a taxi service.

Having a second job, it is held, can have a detrimental effect on teaching because teachers may find it difficult to find a balance between

additional work and their teaching. For example, sometimes teachers cannot make it to class because they are too busy with their second job. Teacher absenteeism, it is argued, can also have a negative impact on the learning of their students. This is because when a teacher is absent from school, little or no learning takes place as it is usually impossible to obtain a substitute teacher at short notice. On this, one principal stated:

> Teachers have the capacity to deliver good quality education, but their primary concern is their daily survival. I believe that there is a correlation between quality teaching and living standard. If living standard of a teacher is low, they can't really concentrate on their teaching job.

Participants also suggest that there may be a significant negative correlation between the absenteeism of primary school teachers and student learning achievement in Khmer and mathematics.

## Limited Teaching and Learning Materials

While access to education has been dramatically expanded in Cambodia in the last two decades, access to adequate teaching and learning resources remains a serious issue in many schools, and especially in rural and remote primary schools. School principals who took part in the study being reported here identified two main issues regarding the shortage of teaching and learning resources in their schools. The first issue relates to the lack of learning materials and the second relates to the lack of instructional materials.

A lack of learning materials was evident across all primary schools in the study. On this, school principals identified two sub-issues. The first sub-issue relates to the shortage of textbooks for learners. Although it is the responsibility of the higher office of education to produce and distribute textbooks to students as quickly as possible they often fail to do so. Regarding this, school principals in the study elaborated as follows:

> Our main problem with the student learning is that students do not have sufficient textbooks. This is because the higher office of education does not distribute enough textbooks, especially Khmer and Mathematics textbooks

> to our school. For example, there are 50 students in the class, but there only 20 textbooks. This makes learning more difficult as students have to share the textbooks.
>
> The Ministry distributes student textbooks to us. We actually proposed to them but the number of textbooks distributed to us was frequently inadequate in the first round. It takes several times to get sufficient textbooks for students. When we have enough textbooks, it is almost time for a new change of textbooks.

This problem is most apparent in rural and remote primary schools. Textbooks are usually distributed to a collection point at the DOE and school principals have to collect them from there. This is a challenge for many school principals because the distances from the schools to the textbook collection point can be extensive. Furthermore, the situation may be exacerbated by a lack of proper means of transportation and poor road conditions.

The school principals in the study commented that there is little they can do to address the shortage of textbooks in their schools because the authority for producing and distributing them lies within the central office of education. However, two approaches tend to be used to deal with the situation. The first approach relates to seeking cooperation from the parents of the children. It means that school principals explain the circumstances to the parents and encourage them to purchase the textbooks themselves for their children. Such an approach can be effective in schools where parents have a reasonably high socio-economic status. On this, one principal from an urban school said:

> It is not a big issue to deal with the shortage of textbooks in our school. Parents of the children in this school have a better living standard. When we don't have enough textbooks for our students, parents just buy the textbooks for their children.

Another principal stated:

> The only problem we face here relates to student learning materials. This is because the MoEYS did not distribute a sufficient number of textbooks, especially Khmer and Maths to us. For example, there are 50 students in the class, but we received only 20 or 30 textbooks. That is difficult to

> facilitate learning. To deal with this problem, we have to seek cooperation from parents of students. We encourage parents of the students to buy textbooks from the bookstore to facilitate their children's learning.

The latter concluded by saying that this is the only thing that can be done to alleviate the problem.

The second approach relates to textbook sharing. This means that students share a textbook in the classroom. One principal explained this arrangement thus:

> It happened that there were 30 students in the class, but there were only 20 textbooks. It was inadequate for all students. Hence, we adopted a sharing approach. Because there are four major subjects including Khmer, Maths, Science and Social Studies, we had to make sure that each student obtained at least a particular subject textbook. Also, students worked as a team so we considered that each member was given a different textbook so that they could exchange.

The adoption of this strategy is common across many schools, and especially in rural and remote ones where the lack of textbooks is a serious problem.

The second sub-issue related to the shortage of learning resources is that of a lack of basic learning materials. These resources include notebooks, pens, pencils, bags and school uniforms. In Cambodia, while students are not required to pay school fees, it is the responsibility of themselves and their parents to acquire basic learning materials. This can be problematic for many students from poor backgrounds. One school principal elaborated on this as follows:

> Living standards of parents can have an influence on children's learning. Some students in this school confront the challenge of having proper school uniform and sufficient learning materials. Because they are poor, they can't afford to have notebooks for all subjects. Thus, they use one notebook for several subjects.

A strategy adopted by school principals to deal with the problem involves utilising the school budget to purchase basic learning materials for some poor students. However, this does not really solve the problem for all because the school budget is usually very restricted.

Another issue faced by school principals regarding teaching and learning resources relates to lack of instructional materials. The school principals interviewed stated that many teachers in their schools struggle to ensure that sufficient teaching materials are available to facilitate their teaching. In particular, they lack a wide range of such instructional materials as teachers' guidebooks, equipment for experiments, posters, maps and technology-related tools. The shortage of these materials is, in the main, attributed by principals to the limitations of the school budget. In regard to this situation, one school principal stated:

> We can never have enough teaching and learning materials to support the teaching and learning process if we completely rely on the government budget. It is impossible to utilise the budget allocated to the school to purchase all required instructional materials. Nevertheless, the teachers have to design instructional materials to support their teaching every year.

Sometimes instructional materials are made by teachers themselves. This activity usually takes place early in the school year and involves teachers from different schools within the same school cluster coming together to make basic equipment. They often share instructional materials within the same school cluster, and some teachers seek support from NGOs and other relevant donors.

## Lack of School Infrastructure

The education infrastructure in Cambodia has recently been expanded to respond to the demand for access to education nationwide. In 2015, there were 7348 primary schools in the nation, 7051 of which were public schools (MoEYS, 2015). Yet, some geographical areas, especially disadvantaged ones, still experience a lack of proper education infrastructure. It is indicated by the results of the study being reported here that while acknowledging the improvement of school infrastructure that has taken place over the last decade, school principals still perceive that there are a number of problems.

One major problem identified by school principals in this regard is that of inadequate classrooms. This is particularly so in disadvantaged

schools in low-socioeconomic areas and in some urban schools with a large population of students. The situation may have been caused by the shift of priority in the expansion of education from the primary school to the lower secondary school level since the early 2000s resulting in a decrease in the number of primary schools. This has had a negative impact on access to education in disadvantaged areas.

A second problem regarding school infrastructure is a shortage of basic school facilities. Many school principals agree that the quality of school infrastructure has improved considerably in the last decade. For example, there has been an increase in the number of schools built with concrete. Also, many of them are equipped with toilets, hand-washing buckets, rubbish bins and drinking water. Furthermore, classrooms have been equipped with blackboards, whiteboards, desks, chairs and tables. However, there are also schools without such facilities, especially in rural and remote areas. Often, these schools do not even have adequate roofs, walls and floors to deal with rainfall during the rainy season.

The ways in which school principals in the study being reported here deal with the lack of classrooms in their schools vary, depending upon the school context and its geographical location. Nevertheless, two strategies are commonly adopted. The first strategy is to use a double or a triple learning shift. The double learning shift, which is widely practised throughout Cambodia, goes from 7:00 am to 11:00 am, and the afternoon shift goes from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The triple learning shift is not very common and is only practised in schools with a very large population of students and with very few classrooms.

The triple learning shift also has major drawbacks. First, there is a shorter learning time at school since the first learning shift goes only from 7:00 am to 10:30 am, the second shift goes only from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm, and the last shift goes only from 1:30 pm to 5:00 pm. Thus, the learning time for students is 3 hours and 30 minutes per day, including break-times. This is shorter than the regular school learning time of 4 hours per day. Secondly, it is held that the triple learning shift can be detrimental to students' learning as some students are often absent for much of the first shift, while others may arrive late for the third shift as they can get delayed as a result of eating lunch before coming to class. Also, the school principals interviewed explained that during the second

learning shift some students find it difficult to pay attention in class as they are sleepy and hungry.

A second strategy employed by school principals to deal with the lack of classrooms relates to using a space in a pagoda or in a nearby villager's house. In Cambodia, schools are commonly located within, or close to, such buildings. The strategy is used, in particular, by some school principals in rural and remote areas if there is a severe shortage of classrooms. As a result, a classroom can be a meeting hall in a pagoda or an open space under a two-storey house. In these cases, there is frequently no tables, desks, or chairs. Also, learning can be disrupted when it rains.

Another strategy yet again adopted by school principals to address the lack of classrooms is to increase the number of students in each. This strategy is possible when the population of students in the school is not too large. Nevertheless, the classrooms are inclined to become crowded and the quality of students' learning may be questionable as it can be difficult for teachers to facilitate effective teaching under such conditions.

## Lack of Parent Involvement in Education

Many hold that schools in both developed and developing countries cannot stand alone. Participation on the part of community members, and especially by the parents of students, is required. There is a number of ways in which they can get involved. Three major types of parent involvement in education were identified by the participants in the study. The first type, it is held, relates to resourcing by parents. In Cambodia, school operations depend primarily upon the government funding programmes. This is usually limited. Also, it is pre-allocated on an item-by-item basis and therefore cannot be drawn upon to meet many of the needs of a school. Thus, it is understandable that resource contribution by parents to education is considered important. Not surprisingly, perhaps, there are indications that the contribution can depend upon the socio-economic background of parents and the school context. For example, parents from a high socio-economic background are likely to make a bigger contribution of resources to education than are parents from a lower socio-economic background. Also, because of having greater access to the cash

economy, parents from urban schools are likely to make a more substantial contribution of resources to education than parents in rural and remote schools.

The second type of parent involvement in education identified by participants relates to parental school-based involvement. This refers, in particular, to activities in which parents take part at the school to influence the learning of their children. These activities can include attending school opening days, taking part in teacher-parent meetings and talking to teachers and principals.

School principals in the study being reported here widely agreed that parents have become more involved in school activities than previously. Again, it seems that parents in urban areas become more involved than do parents of children in rural and remote areas, perhaps because of ease of access to the schools. This increased involvement, it is held, is desirable for establishing good relationships between school and family.

The third type of parent involvement in education at the primary school level relates to parent home-based involvement. More specifically, it refers to what parents do at home to influence the learning of their children. It can include talking to children, supervising homework and giving them extra lessons. Overall, school principals in the study reported here agreed that there has been an increase in parent involvement in the learning of children at home and that this has had a significant positive impact on learning.

While acknowledging the increase in parent involvement in schools, school principals also indicated that its occurrence continues to be limited. They explained that many parents still pay little attention to the learning of their children, make only a limited resource contribution to help them to learn, and participate in very few school activities. One school principal made explicit reference to this issue as follows:

> Parental involvement in schooling is limited. Parents who understand the value of education tend to pay more attention to their children's learning. However, many parents of children below average tend to lack involvement in the learning of their children. I believe that if they paid attention to the learning of their children by helping them with homework, for example, their children would do better at school. We actually have students'

> learning records that keep parents informed about the learning of their children. Some parents do not even read it. We invite them to school meetings to discuss their children's learning they say they are busy. We not only write to them but also call them.

The comment not only indicates a perception of a lack of parent involvement in the learning of children, but also one of a lack of attention being given by parents to the efforts of school principals to engage parents in the life of the school.

Participants identified a number of influences that they believe contribute to the lack of parent involvement in education in Cambodia. The first relates to poverty. Cambodia has not long recovered from its long civil wars and genocide. It is therefore not surprising that many people live in poverty. Indeed, according to UNDP (2016), Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 143 out of 188 countries in the Human Development Index (HDI). In 2012, 18.9 percent of the Cambodian population lived in poverty, meaning that they earned less than USD1.25 per day (Ministry of Planning, 2014). Poverty, it is held, has also constrained many parents from engaging in education. For example, school principals in the study indicated that because of poverty, some parents ask their children to stay at home to take care of younger siblings while they go to work, while others get their children to join the income-generating labour force.

A second influence identified by participants relates to parent migration. There is a number of reasons why people migrate in Cambodia. These include repatriation, marriage, search for employment, insecurity, transfer of work place, land/home loss and education (Ministry of Planning, 2012). The most common reason identified by school principals in the study relates to searching for employment opportunities. Another common reason relates to receiving a transfer in one's work place. This is particularly the case with parents who are civil servants or in the military, as they are often posted to different geographical locations.

Parent migration, it was held, can adversly affect on the learning of children in several ways. Some parents leave their children at home with relatives or grandparents. This can lead to irregular attendance at school, possibly resulting in poor learning achievement and even dropout. Others

bring their children with them to their new locations. This, however, can give rise to other problems. For example, some parents, again rather than sending their children to school in the new location, encourage them to remain at home to take care of siblings, or arrange for them to join the income-generating labour force. Other parents do enrol their children in a new school when they migrate to a new location, but because they are only seasonal migrants they return to their home community relatively quickly. The return can, in the view of participants in the study being reported here, disrupt the learning of the children. For example, one school principal stated:

> There are salt farms in our community. Because of poverty, some parents from other districts bring their children with them when they come to work on salt farms here. They get their children enrolled in my school.

She concluded by saying that they have to take their children back home with them when the salt season is over.

A third issue raised by participants regarding the lack of parent involvement relates to the low education attainment of many parents. According to the Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey 2010 (Ministry of Planning, 2012) of 2012, the adult literacy rate, which relates to the population aged 15 and over, was approximately 77 percent in 2010, being highest in Phnom Penh and other urban areas. This indicates that the education attainment of parents in rural and remote areas is lower than that of their counterparts in urban areas. In this connection, school principals interviewed indicated that parents with minimal education tend to hold a poor perception of education and, as a result, have low expectations in relation to the learning of their children.

School principals in the study also reported that engaging parents in education-related activities can be a challenging matter because education management has traditionally been the business of school principals and teachers. Nevertheless, a number of strategies are adopted by school principals to engage parents in schooling. The first strategy relates to ‘leading by example’. This means that school principals show the community and parents of children that they are committed to bring about school improvement by actively engaging with them. It is through

adopting such a leadership approach, they hold, that mutual trust and communication between school and community can be built. For example, one school principal stated:

> When seeking support from the community members, we have to show them that we are committed to bringing development to the school. What is important here is that we have to build mutual trust and respect with the community members. When they trust us, they would be willing to make contributions to school development without any doubt … Parents in this school are very participative. I never send them any invitation letters to attend school meetings. I just inform them through their children and they come to the meeting. For example, last week more than 500 parents attended the meeting and we generated more than USD 2,000 as a result.

This leadership style is practised especially by school principals who identify school improvement as their top priority.

The second strategy used by school principals to engage parents in the activity of schools relates to raising their awareness regarding the importance of education. This is done by inviting parents to attend school meetings where principals explain both the school vision and mission and the school development plan. How often such meetings are held can differ from school to school. Some school principals organise for the meetings to take place throughout the school year and they invite as many parents of the students as possible to attend. Other schools only invite parents to attend school meetings once or twice a year, normally early in the school year and at the end of the school year.

Another strategy adopted by school principals to engage parents in schools involves creating opportunities for them to meet each other at school. Some schools in the study have implemented a programme called a 'mother meeting', to enable mothers to meet and share their experiences about their involvement in the learning of their children. These meetings, it is believed, have promoted a positive attitude amongst parents regarding their engagement in their children's learning. For example, it was claimed that parents who have experienced these meetings show increased interest in the learning of their children by spending more time helping them to learn at home, attending school meetings, and following up on

the learning of their children with teachers. At the same time, there is a concern that some parents seem to regress to their earlier attitudes toward the learning of their children after a programme is discontinued.

A further strategy yet again used by school principals to improve parent involvement in education relates to visiting parents of children at home. This strategy is especially practised by principals in rural and remote areas where the involvement of parents in education can be very limited. The visits not only help the school principals understand why parents are unable to participate in school, but also give them an opportunity to update the parents on their children's learning and how they could help to improve it.

## Student Dropout

As with governments in many other developing countries in the world, the government of Cambodia committed itself to achieving universal primary education by 2015. The commitment is reflected in the *Education for All Plan 2003–2015* (MoEYS, 2003). The plan consists of three main policy objectives, namely, ensuring equitable access to education, improving the quality and efficiency of education, and enhancing capacity building for decentralisation (MoEYS, 2003, 2005, 2010, 2014a). The commitment to achieving universal primary education was also mirrored in Cambodia's Millennium Development Goals document which was launched in late 2003. It emphasised achieving nine-year basic education for all by ensuring that all children complete primary school education by 2010 and nine-year basic education by 2015, and also that gender disparity in basic education would be eliminated by 2015 (Ministry of Planning, 2003).

Since the implementation of the EFA Plan and Cambodia's MDG, access to basic school education has been significantly expanded. Both net and cross enrolments have increased considerably, in particular at the primary school level. However, getting children into schools does not necessarily mean that they will remain there until they complete their education. According to the MoEYS (MoEYS, 2014a), the dropout rate from primary schools in Cambodia was 8 percent in 2013. It is,

therefore, not surprising that one of the matters identified by school principals in the study regarding teaching and learning relates to student attrition.

Student dropout was identified in all schools in the study being reported here, but the dropout rate in rural schools, and particularly in remote schools, was higher than in urban schools. A number of influences were proposed as contributing to this situation. One school principal commented as follows:

> In a workshop that was focused on factors contributing to poor learning achievement and dropout, I pointed out that it is not caused by one particular factor but many interrelated factors including the influence of the higher office of education, school and parents. We cannot blame any individual group of stakeholders because it is a shared problem. Some parents pointed the finger at teachers and teachers blamed the students for poor learning performance. Some parents do not understand their role in influencing the learning of their children. They, for instance, asked their children to return home during learning hours. Also, some of the parents never read and sign on the learning record book of their children because they are illiterate. They have no idea about the learning progress of their children. They primarily depend upon the school to educate their children, but in fact the children spend only 4 hours learning at school and 20 hours at home.

Two major influences contributing to dropout at the primary school level in Cambodia can be identified from comments like that above. They are family influences and individual influences.

## Family Influences

The family, it is held, is one of the influences that can have a significant impact on dropout at the primary school level. In this regard, school principals identified three family influences. The first relates to the low socio-economic background of parents; the majority of the students dropping out at the primary school level appears to be in this cohort. Poverty means that parents have to prioritise producing food over

education. In addition, some parents, principals claim, do not value education highly. For example, one school principal stated:

> Some parents with low socio-economic status asked their children to stay home and generate income to support the family. Kids in grade 5 and 6 are grown up these days and there are nearby factories (clothes and shoes) that provide job opportunities for those students.

Another school principal made a similar comment on this situation:

> There is a high student dropout in this school, especially at grade 5 and 6. Most parents in this community are famers. They often ask their children to be absent from school during harvesting season. Their farming is up the hills, far away from their home. They often take their children with them when they go farming up there. Some children can be absent from school for 10 or 15 days. This can have a negative impact on the learning of their children and could result in the dropping out of school.

Poverty, it is held, can also be linked to other influences that may contribute to dropout. These include poor nutrition, chronic sickness, hunger and lack of transportation. Another family influence leading to primary school student dropout in Cambodia, as has already been pointed out, relates to parent migration.

## Influences at the Individual Student Level

The main set of influences leading to student attrition in Cambodian primary schools relates to the nature of the students. A number of such influences were identified by principals. The first relates to the learning attitude. If a student has a poor learning attitude, principals claim, he or she is unlikely to achieve fruitful learning outcomes. This was a concern for many school principals in the study.

A second influence identified by principals relates to the low self-esteem of some students. They argued that students with low self-esteem often do not see themselves as being good at learning, and can feel inferior to their peers in class. Again, they hold that this can be linked

to social class, low education of parents, low-socio-economic background, and peer influences. In particular, school principals in the study stated that students with low self-esteem are frequently absent from class and that their learning performance usually lags behind that of their peers.

Gender is also seen as an influence that can contribute to dropout at the primary school level in Cambodia. Although girls are encouraged to take part in the community in various ways, they can sometimes be restricted in this regard by parental decisions. For example, school principals who participated in the study stated that parents tend to give priority to boys when they have to choose between sending girls and boys to school and keeping them in school. Principals also hold that girls, especially those in Grade 5 and Grade 6, are frequently asked to drop out of school to take care of family members. One school principal made the following comment on this matter:

> One serious problem we face in this school is that there is a high absenteeism and student dropout. Many students, especially girls do not stay in school until they complete their primary school education. Often, they drop out of school when they reach grade 5 and 6. Evidently, half of my grade 6 students have already discontinued their study this year. Some parents ask their children to drop out of school and put them in labour generation activities, including working in a hotel while other parents ask them to stay home and take care of their siblings.

Consequently, it is not surprising that girls receive less education than boys and that female attrition is higher than for males.

## Issues Relating to Curriculum

The third broad set of the issues faced by principals at the primary school level resulting from Cambodia being a developing country relates to the school curriculum. In this connection, a number of issues were reported by school principals in the study. Two in particular stand out. They are frequent change in the curriculum and overload in the curriculum.

## Frequent Curriculum Change

The MoEYS has introduced numerous changes to the national curriculum policy since education reconstruction began early in the 1980s. The first national curriculum policy 'reform' was introduced in 1996. Several committees were set up to support the curriculum 'reform' process. These include the Curriculum Reform Committee and the Curriculum Implementation Committee (MoEYS, 2004).

The 1996 curriculum was reviewed in 2004. As a result, some key features of the curriculum were changed. There was an increase in the teaching time allocated. Primary school students now had to attend five sessions of teaching per day and attend school for five days per week (MoEYS, 2004). Moreover, each period was to last 40 minutes. The new curriculum also introduced a Local Life Skills Programme (LLSP) for 2-to-5 periods per week (MoEYS, 2004).

In 2006, three committees were set up within the MoEYS to deal with curriculum matters. They were the Education Materials Approval Board (EMAB) dealing with the approval of textbooks and other related reading materials to be used in schools, the Standards Reference Group in charge of defining curriculum standards for grades 3, 6 and 9, and the Life Skills Working Group (LSWG) responsible for the life skills policy for use in schools (MoEYS, 2004).

The 2005–2009 curriculum reforms were developed to enable the achievement of the key priorities of education reform spelt out in the *Education for All Plan 2003–2015* (MoEYS, 2003). The general aim was "to develop fully the talents and capacities of all students in order that they become able people, with parallel and balanced intellectual, spiritual, mental and physical growth and development" (MoEYS, 2004, p. 4). The basic-primary school education plan aimed to contribute to the achievement of the aims of schooling in order that students could further their studies at the upper grades, participate in vocational training, and engage in the general life of the community. Basic education as referred to here is a combination of primary school education and lower secondary school education. With regard to primary school education, the curriculum is focused on the development of students' personalities by enhancing their mental and psychological abilities (MoEYS, 2004).

Although no curriculum policy document was made available following the publication of the 2005–2009 curriculum policy in 2004, the curriculum has to be reviewed every five years (MoEYS, 2004). For instance, the 2005–2009 curriculum policy was reviewed in 2009 for the period of 2010–2014. The reviews resulted in changes being made to key features of the curriculum. This led to a number of challenges arising for teachers and principals in the study being reported here. First, limited support, they argued, had been given to them and to the teachers for implementation. Also, they claim that they were not well informed about the nature of the curriculum changes to be implemented. Although orientation workshops were held for principals and teachers they usually only lasted one or two days. This was a very short time for them to gain a full understanding of the new curriculum content. By way of elaboration, one principal stated:

> The problem with the curriculum change is that minimal support was given to us to implement the new curriculum. There were usually short periods of training/orientation to the curriculum change. However, we did not really learn the new concepts/content of the curriculum in this short time

Another school principal added:

> There has been frequent change in the primary school curriculum. When change is introduced to national curriculum, there is also a change in teaching and learning materials, especially textbooks. There have been some changes to the textbooks of grade 3 in the last few years. I was invited to attend a meeting about the replacement of the textbooks at the district education office, but I was not informed about the change made to the content of the textbooks.

As a result, they argued, teachers and principals often have only a limited knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and may be unable to translate effectively into practice the proposed changes.

Secondly, they argued, there may be inadequate resources available to support the implementation of curriculum change at the school level. When there is a change to the curriculum and it relates to learning and teaching materials, it is the responsibility of the MoEYS to make sure that sufficient

quantities of these materials are distributed to the schools and that they arrive on time. However, this is often not the case, with school principals reporting a lack of both textbooks for students and teaching guides for teachers.

### Overload in the School Curriculum

Primary school education in Cambodia is divided into two main levels. The first level is from grade 1 to grade 3. The purpose of education at this level is "to ensure that every child has a strong foundation in literacy and mathematics and that they develop their health, physical fitness, moral understanding, learning skills and life skills" (MoEYS, 2004, p. 9). The school subjects at this level include Khmer (13 lessons), mathematics (7 lessons), science and social science including art education (3 lessons), physical and health education (2 lessons) and a local life skill programme (2–5 lessons). Hence, students at this level have to study between 27 and 30 lessons per week.

The second level of primary school education is from grade 4 to grade 6. Its purpose is to expand and consolidate the knowledge and understanding that students have acquired from the first level (MoEYS, 2004). Students continue to study the same subjects and the same number of lessons as at the previous level, which is between 27 and 30 lessons per week. However, the number of Khmer lessons has been reduced from 13 lessons per week to 10 lessons per week in grade 4, and to 8 lessons per week in grade 5 and grade 6. Sport and foreign languages are also introduced at this level of education.

In addition to all of these compulsory subjects, foreign language and extra-curricular subjects have been introduced. Therefore, it is not surprising that some school principals in the study stated that too much content is prescribed for the amount of time allocated to education at the primary school level.

## Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the issues currently of concern to primary school leaders in Cambodia, and how they deal with them. These are issues relating to Cambodia's status as a developing country. They pertain

to administration, to teaching and learning, and to curriculum. The next chapter will consider how the situation for leaders at the primary school level in Cambodia is compounded by its status as a post-new war country.

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# 6

# Cambodia as a Post-New War Country: Current Concerns of School Leaders

## Introduction

A review of the literature related to education, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction indicates that education and conflict can mutually shape each other. Education can have an influence on conflict either by fuelling violence or reducing the risk of violence (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2005; Hodgkin, 2006; Paulson, 2011; Paulson & Rappleye, 2007; Smith, 2005; World Bank, 2005). Regarding its contribution to violent conflict, education can play a part by reproducing inequality, exclusion and social polarisation, which can intensify 'social divisions' and eventually increase tensions in a society (Davies, 2005). Violent conflict can also have a negative impact on education in a number of ways, including through the destruction of infrastructure and institutions, and by adding to the damaged psychological state of children associated with loss of family, physical violence and displacement (Seitz, 2004). On the other hand, education can also help to prevent and reduce violence, and contribute to rebuilding conflict-affected societies through peace education initiatives focused on social justice, equality and inclusive citizenship (Bush & Saltarelli,


T. Kheang et al., *Primary School Leadership in Cambodia*,
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2000; Davies, 2005). Buckland (2006), for example, has argued that it can heal psychological effects, address youth unemployment, promote a democratic environment, and contribute to economic and social development in societies.

Keeping the position above in mind, it will be recalled that the previous chapter addressed three issues currently of concern to primary school leaders in Cambodia as a result of the country being a developing country, and how these concerns are dealt with. This chapter now considers two broad issues arising from Cambodia's status as a post-new war country and how this reality compounds issues that principals are faced with at the primary school level. The issues in question relate mainly to administration and to teaching and learning.

## Issues Relating to Administration

In common with governments in other post-new war countries around the world, the government of post-conflict Cambodia has placed a great deal of emphasis on education as a means to reconstruct the nation as a result of the effects of civil wars and the genocide that have occurred. In particular, a series of education reconstruction plans have been developed and implemented nationwide. For education administration, a gradual policy of decentralisation has been adopted. It has aimed to improve access to schooling, enhance the quality of education, and promote institutional capacity development (MoEYS, 2010, 2014).

The decentralisation of education has involved shifting some aspects of decision-making authority and responsibility from the central-office level of education to school-level stakeholders. However, these stakeholders have been provided with minimal support to carry out their new responsibilities. As a result, and because of Cambodia being a post-conflict country, they face, as has already been pointed out, two sets of issues in implementing the education reconstruction plans at the school level. One of these sets of issues has to do with school administration. In this connection, three sets of sub-issues were identified. These are political influences on education, psychological trauma, and landmines.

## Political Influence on Education

Education and politics can mutually shape each other. Education can be a powerful tool both for promoting political inclusion and creating political exclusion. Also, politics can be significant in promoting both inclusion and exclusion in education. When politics exerts a major influence on the education system, it can create problems. These can relate to curriculum development, textbook design, the teaching of history, and the language of instruction (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

The education system in post-new war Cambodia has been significantly influenced by politics in a number of ways. The first such influence relates to the use of networks in appointment processes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the use of networks can be influential when it comes to the selection of school principals. Some teachers have been appointed to be principals because of their connection to a political group or to an influential individual. Thus, school principals can be political appointees in a hierarchical and politicised system in which they have to manage a school in a way that closely follows the complex requirements of the central office of education. Also, political networks can be influential when it comes to teachers' applications for transferring to other schools.

Another political influence on education in primary schools in post-new war Cambodia relates to making financial contributions to the party. School principals interviewed in the study being reported here stated that they had been asked to make a financial contribution of 200 Riels per month to the ruling political party with which they were associated. Also, they had to approach teachers in their schools to urge them to make such contributions. This situation is reflected in the following comment of a school principal:

> Each of us has to contribute 200 Riels per month. It is therefore 2400 Riels per year. As the school principal, I have to collect money from my staff members and give it to the DoE. We make the contribution every year. I know some teachers are happy to make the contribution while others are not. However, I have to convince them. I don't want any trouble from the higher office of education.

Some school principals and teachers are willing to make the contribution, viewing it as a personal investment. Others, however, express concern that it can reduce their already low salaries and can create a bad image of educators in broader society.

An additional way in which politics can have an influence relates to attendance at political party meetings. On this, there was general agreement among the school principals interviewed that they have to attend political party meetings when they are held in their community. These meetings are organised once a month and usually on a Sunday, so that there is no interruption to the regular work of school principals. In relation to this matter, one school principal explained:

> To avoid any conflict and interruption to the work performance of civil servants, it is decided that the political party meeting should be held on a Sunday. I am sometimes invited to attend the meeting. The meeting is held more frequently when there is an election. However, it is not much work. I have to be cautious as the school principal because I am being watched by other people (teachers) in the school.

While some school principals stated that they willingly participate in the meetings, others expressed frustration, claiming that attendance can interfere with their free time and with their public image as school principals.

Overall, the principals interviewed purport that not only do they function as school leaders, but they are also seen to represent the political party to which they are connected. Such political circumstances can, they suggest, be detrimental to their work. In particular, they contend, it can lead to discrimination for school-level stakeholders, and especially school principals and teachers who do not subscribe to the political views of the ruling party. As a result, it is argued, the participation of teachers and other school-level stakeholders in school development can be restricted. This leads some to suggest that the influence of politics on the primary school system in Cambodia should be minimised if inclusive participation by relevant school-level stakeholders is to be realised.

## Psychological Trauma

Armed conflict can be debilitating to a society in a variety of ways. In some cases, this can be short-term. In other cases, however, it can be long-term, continuing to permeate society long after the war has been resolved. One example of the long-term impact of conflict identified by education stakeholders at the primary school level in post-new war Cambodia relates to psychological trauma. This refers to the physical and psychological disturbances that Cambodians still experience as a result of the civil war and genocide which occurred in the country between the 1970s and 1990s.

The civil war and genocide in Cambodia ended long ago, but the hardships, suffering and fear that many experienced during that time have not ceased. The people experienced direct and indirect physical and psychological disturbances which have continued to have a detrimental effect on their daily lives. Such traumatic experiences were reflected in the following comment by one school principal:

> I will never forget the Pol Pot regime in my life, especially the experiences that I had during that time. Back then, I was in my late teens. Once, I was about to be executed but was lucky to be replaced by someone else… The experience really haunts me. I hoped it would fly away with time, but it is impossible. This is because I witnessed a lot of things, especially killing. I saw one of my friends who was having dinner with me at that time being tied up and taken away to be killed and I could do nothing.

Another school principal shared his experience of the Khmer Rouge soldiers who disrupted teaching and learning at his school:

> I can't forget what happened in the 1990s. When I began my job as a teacher in this school, the Khmer Rouge soldiers were around the community. Teaching and learning was frequently interrupted when they came to the community. Some teachers and principals were caught up and taken away from the community. I was lucky back then that I was saved by the head monk who was previously associated with the Khmer Rouge. I was suffering a lot at that time. I risked my life.

These comments reflect the finding of Mollica (1986), who studied Indochinese psychiatric patients and found that Cambodian patients experienced an average of 16 major trauma events. These events included experiences in four general categories, namely, deprivation, physical injury and torture, incarceration/concentration camps, and witnessing execution and torture. Similarly, Bit (1991) argued that Cambodian survivors of the civil war and genocide suffered excessive trauma, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, conversion disorder, aggression, anxiety disorders and violence.

Even though some of the participants in the study being reported here had experienced multiple traumatic events resulting from years of witnessing the civil war and brutal genocide, they had received minimal or no support to deal with their psychological wounds. The lack of support can put such survivors in danger as the effects of the experiences of trauma are likely to be enormous. For example, some of those interviewed recalled experiencing sustained oppression and violence, as well as direct and indirect physical and mental abuses during the civil war and genocide. In this connection, Bit (1991) has explained that the experience of trauma resulting from violent conflict can leave its survivors with changed perceptions of both themselves and of the world around them, which, in turn, can foster uncontrolled hostile assaults. In relation to education, traumatic experiences can create difficulty for education stakeholders, especially at the school level, in establishing a more democratic working environment (Pellini, 2007). In particular, it can limit the participation and contribution of those stakeholders in school improvement.

## Landmines

Another significant issue identified by participants in the study relates to landmines. These were laid down during the civil wars and continue to disrupt the reconstruction of education at the primary school level, especially in regions that were occupied by Khmer Rouge soldiers. School principals reported that mines can still be found littered around schools. This is particularly true in relation to economically and socially disadvantaged areas in Otdor Meanchey, where landmines and unexploded

ordinances (UXO) are still hidden beneath the ground. Needless to say, this situation can be dangerous for children in those locations who attend school. They have to travel to school on roads that have not been cleared of mines. Also, they sometimes have to walk through fields where landmines are still to be found.

The history of landmines in post-new war Cambodia can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s. The combat by various groups at that time was characterised by the heavy use of these weapons, which, along with unexploded ordinances (UXO), were to be found in almost every part of the country. It was estimated that at least 2.7 million tons of landmines were planted between 1965 and 1973, and over 10 million landmines were placed in different parts of the country over the next two decades (GeoSpatial International Inc., 2002). In addition, more than 1 million tons of general purpose bombs and 26 million submunitions were dropped in some parts of the country by the United States between the 1960s and the 1970s (Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor, 2010). A large number of those landmines and UXOs have continued to affect society. According to the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor (2003), between 4 and 6 million landmines existed in the country in 2003 and covered an area of 4466 square kilometres. GeoSpatial International Inc. (2002) has reported that over 46 percent of Cambodian villages were contaminated, with 23.7 percent of them being rated as very severe, 24.2 percent as severe and 52.1 percent as less severe.

Landmines and UXOs have put many Cambodian lives, and in particular people in the countryside, in danger. According to UNICEF (2004), Cambodia has one of the highest rates of landmine casualties in the world and children account for almost half of all of those killed by them. The Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) (2015) reported a total of 64,561 landmine casualties between 1979 and 2015, 79 percent of which were caused by landmines and 21 percent by Extreme Warfare Revenges (EWRs). Most of the incidents occurred in the northern and north-western provinces of the country. Some 8980 people became amputees while others were injured or died before they could be discovered and transported to medical facilities (CMAA, 2015).

## Issues Relating to Teaching and Learning

The second set of issues confronted by leaders in primary schools as a result of Cambodia being a post-conflict country relates to teaching and learning. On this theme, a number of sub-issues were highlighted by school leaders. These are shortage of teachers, choice of foreign language, and peacebuilding and conflict-prevention education.

### Shortage of Teachers

Because a shortage of teachers can be a challenge in both developing and post-conflict nations, an explanation of why the issue is considered in this chapter specifically as a post-conflict influence needs to be explained. The first reason relates to the nature of the war and especially the genocide that occurred in the country in the 1970s. It has been estimated that at least 1.7 million people died from execution, starvation, disease or overwork during the Khmer Rouge era between 1975 and 1979 (Ayres, 2003). Many of these people had acquired higher education and included professors, teachers, students, doctors and lawyers. Schools reopened following the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979 and a huge number of teachers were recruited for teaching posts. This raised a critical issue for education reconstruction as only a small number of educated people were available in the country (Ayres, 2003; Dunnett, 1993).

Another reason why there has been a shortage of teachers in Cambodia because of it being a post-conflict country relates to political changes in the late 1990s. The national election in 1993 resulted in the formation of a coalition government comprising representatives of two parties. One significant change resulting from an agreement arrived at by the two power-sharing political parties in 1996 was associated with the mandatory retirement of civil servants, including teachers, at the age of 55 for men and 50 for women, regardless of political affiliation (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005). This policy affected many teachers as they were forced to leave their teaching positions within a short period of time. This left a considerable number of teaching positions, especially in disadvantaged areas, unfilled. While the age of retirement was soon changed to 60 to

address the situation, it was too late to solve the problem of a chronic teacher shortage in rural and remote areas (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005).

The shortage of teachers in Cambodia as a result of legacies of wars and the genocide in the country is also related to a shift in education policy which raised the requirement for entry to Provincial Teacher Training Centres (PTTCs) to 11 years of education in 1994 and to 12 years of education in 1998 (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005). While the policy was aimed at improving the quality of education standards through enhancing the quality of teacher education, it failed to take into consideration the consequences for recruitment. Geeves and Bredenberg (2005) have highlighted that the policy exacerbated the existing problem of teacher shortage in the countryside that was already caused by the retirement policy. This is because the requirement of 12 years of formal education for admission to PTTCs limited the potential applicant pool from rural and remote areas at a time when there was only a small number of students with secondary school education available to aspire to entering the teaching profession (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005).

The shortage of teachers and its connection with Cambodia being a post-conflict country is also related to an expansion of education services in newly re-integrated areas which were previously affected by conflict. This took place following the election in 1993 (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005). The coalition government then enabled the country to gradually shift from being in a state of violent conflict to negotiation taking place for national reconciliation (Chandler, 2008). This allowed some conflict-affected regions to be re-integrated and for an expansion of education services to those areas. The expansion brought pressure on the government because a large number of teachers were required to take the teaching posts (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005). Also, it is important to note that violent conflict was still active in some other regions within the country until 1998.

It is clear from the above position that the shortage of teachers in Cambodia can be largely attributed to social and political changes that took place in the country as a result of violent conflict and genocide. The government of Cambodia, with assistance from donors and NGOs, has worked to tackle the issue. As a result, a number of teacher training centres were established and thousands of teachers have been trained.

Currently, there are 26 teacher training centres in the nation. They consist of a National Pre-School Training Centre, 18 Provincial Teacher Training Centres, six Regional Teacher Training Centres and a National Institute of Education. Primary school teachers are trained at the Provincial Teacher Training Centres. Also, the number of trained teachers has increased significantly since the 1980s. In 2004, it was reported that 5000 teacher trainees had been recruited annually across all education levels. By 2015, there were 55,788 primary education staff in Cambodia, 44,292 of whom were teaching staff, made up of 52.4 percent of female representation (MoEYS, 2015).

Notwithstanding the continuous efforts by the government to deal with the deficit of teachers in the country, there is still a shortage at the primary school level. What is being referred to here is the difference between the number of classes to be taught in the schools and the number of teaching staff available. This shortage of teachers is a particular challenge for many primary schools in rural and remote areas where teaching is not deemed to be an attractive job and where working conditions can be unpleasant. One school principal from a large rural school reflected on this as follows:

> There are only seven trained teachers in my school and this number is inadequate for the actual classes that we have. There are more than 700 students in this school including kindergartens. That is a real challenge for my school. All teachers have to do double-shift teaching- morning and afternoon. It is a headache. We need more teachers. The adequate number of teachers should be 13.

The situation can also apply to small remote primary schools. One school principal from such a school stated:

> The shortage of teachers has been a critical issue in my school. There are only two teachers in this school including myself. So we have to teach both morning and afternoon classes. It is quite difficult for me to take the responsibility as a teacher and a principal. I sometimes cannot sleep at night as I have to prepare my teaching lessons and some administrative work at the same time.

The issue highlighted was also shared by the principals in urban schools where teacher turnover caused by retirement is high and where the opportunity for recruiting teachers to replace those who leave is limited. At the same time, the teacher shortage in urban schools is not as serious as it is in rural and remote schools.

In Cambodia, the authority for the recruitment and deployment of teachers lies within the higher offices of education. This means that the number of primary school teachers to be recruited annually is determined by the central government and the recruitment and deployment of the teachers are conducted at the provincial level. While school principals have very little authority in the recruitment and deployment process, dealing with the issue of teacher shortage requires joint action between stakeholders from the higher offices of education and those at the school level. The school principals interviewed indicated that they are required to report problems, along with some possible solutions and strategies to the higher offices of education for consideration. All proposed solutions and strategies require approval from these higher offices before they can be implemented. Also, the proposed solutions and strategies can vary from school to school, depending upon the school context.

One strategy used since the early 2000s relates to the redeployment of teaching and non-teaching staff. Non-teaching staff, including principals, deputy principals, secretaries and librarians are required to take up a teaching load as well as maintain their existing responsibilities (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005). Also, teachers have been redeployed from over-staffed schools to under-staffed schools and to disadvantaged areas. As an incentive to engage in the process, allowances are offered to those teachers.

This strategy has had mixed results. While school principals in the study acknowledged that more teachers have been posted to their schools than previously, they also stated that there is a challenge to retain them for a prolonged period of time in order to avoid having a rapid turnover of staff. One principal elaborated on this as follows:

> There is a shortage of teachers in this school. The teachers in this school are from other distant communities and they have to rent accommodation close to the school. They usually transfer to other schools after three years.

> This year, three teachers have applied for transferring. I asked them to stay here one more year, but they said that they had to go.

Because those teachers tend not to be from the community in which they teach, they frequently transfer to other schools or to schools in their home community after they have become fully certified.

A second strategy used by school principals to address the shortage of teachers in their schools relates to using double-shift teaching. This means that teachers teach one group in the morning and another in the afternoon, thus teaching 8 hours per day. The strategy was initially adopted in the late 1990s to increase the efficiency and quality of education by reducing the number of the non-teaching positions at schools and by providing incentives to existing teachers to take additional teaching duties (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005). It was later seen as a necessary strategy to respond to the reduction in the number of contract teachers at the primary school level.

While double-shift teaching helps in addressing teacher shortage and provides additional income for teachers, it also adds to the workload of teachers. Not only do they have to teach for 8 hours a day, they also have to engage in a good deal of extra lesson preparation, marking of homework, and administrative work. As a result, it is perceived that double-shift teaching can be detrimental to classroom instruction.

A third strategy adopted by school principals to deal with the teacher shortage relates to using teachers from other schools within the same school cluster. Principals in some schools seek out the possibility of obtaining teachers from other schools where teacher shortage is not a problem, to come and help. One school principal explained this with the following comment:

> To deal with the shortage of teachers, I have to recruit teachers from other schools to teach here. What I need to do is make a request for teachers from a nearby school. Also, I have to report the situation to the higher office of education in order for them to arrange the allowance for the teachers who come to teach at my school. Thus, teachers can make an extra income.

However, there is no guarantee that such requests will be accepted. This is because it is up to the teachers themselves to decide what to do.

Another strategy, yet again, employed by school principals to address the shortage of teachers in their school relates to adopting multigrade teaching. This is a teaching approach that brings children of multiple grades, ages and abilities together into one class under the supervision of one teacher (Benveniste, Marshall, & Araujo, 2008; UNESCO, 1995). Such an approach is often adopted in rural and remote schools in Otdor Meanchey Province, where the number of students enrolled in the schools is often small and where teacher shortage can be critical. The multigrade classes adopt a curriculum that is designed by the central office of education. One principal from the province made the following observation:

> There is a shortage of teachers in this school. We actually had enough teachers last year, but because one teacher transferred to other school we have the shortage problem. Thus, we have to use a multigrade teaching approach. We combine students of grade one with four, grade three with six and grade two with five.

Several other principals from the same province also reported using multigrade teaching to alleviate both the shortage of teachers in their schools and the lack of classrooms.

Multigrade teaching has been introduced in an effort by the government of Cambodia to improve access to schools in disadvantaged areas as well as to extend the availability of primary schooling. While the practice of this teaching approach helps in dealing with the shortage of teachers in the nation and in expanding access to education in disadvantaged communities where the population is sparse, it is perceived not to be without drawbacks. Multigrade teachers are frequently seen as lacking appropriate pedagogical training and as not being well prepared to handle multigrade classes. In addition, school facilities may not be seen to be conducive to the multigrade teaching approach. In particular, it is held that there is often a shortage of basic teaching and learning materials to facilitate it. Also, multigrade classes are inclined to have a large number of students in them. This, it is argued, can make it difficult for teachers to pursue effective multigrade teaching. These drawbacks, many contend, can diminish the quality of teaching and learning in some Cambodian primary schools.

Another strategy adopted to address the issue of teacher shortage in primary schools in post-conflict Cambodia relates to using contract teachers. This refers to individuals who are employed to teach at a primary school on a contract. The strategy is popular among primary schools in Otdor Meanchey Province and Siem Reap Province, where there is regularly a serious shortage of teachers. One school principal in Siem Reap Province explained this arrangement as follows:

> Because of the teacher shortage in our school, I have to recruit four contract teachers and I also borrowed three teachers from other schools this year… I am given the authority to recruit the contract teachers, but I have to request for financial assistance from the higher office of education to support the recruitment.

The recruitment of contract teachers is done locally. In other words, contract teachers are directly recruited by school-level stakeholders, mainly school principals, and are remunerated by the government.

Contract teaching has been used in rural and remote primary schools in Cambodia since the 1990s as a mechanism to deal with shortages of teachers. The number of contract teachers made up 9 percent of the total teaching forces at the primary school level in 2002 (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005), but it has decreased since then. They are usually retired teachers and young students who attained an education qualification that meets the minimum requirement to allow them to work in schools. Nevertheless, some of the young students are themselves from disadvantaged areas with limited education attainment. Yet, they are able to work with children who study through the medium of their own language as long as they are trusted by the parents (Fyfe, 2007; Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005).

While contract teaching goes some way towards solving the issue of teacher shortage in the primary schools of Cambodia, it also generates a number of perceived problems. One perceived problem relates to corruption. The corruption activities associated with the recruitment system of contract teachers include unofficially paying fees from a contract teacher's payment, contract teachers offering bribes to obtain special entry, the charging of unofficial fees for posting and transferring a contract teacher to what he or she considers to be a desirable location, and bureaucrats

inventing fictitious contract teachers to claim payments for themselves (Geeves & Bredenberg, 2005).

Another problem relates to the low and irregular payment of contract teachers. They are paid much less than certified teachers. They work full time and receive a salary of about 140,000 Riels (approximately USD 35), which is 50 percent of the wage of a regular teacher. To make the situation worse, they are often paid at irregular intervals.

## Deciding on the Foreign Language to Teach

Deciding on the foreign language to teach in the school system can be problematic for both developing and post-conflict nations. In this regard, Cambodia has a complex history of social and political change brought about mainly by violent conflict. This has had a major impact on education development in the country and especially in relation to the development of foreign language policy in the education system.

Language policy development in Cambodia can be traced back to the French colonial period between 1863 and 1953. During this period, French served as the language of international communication (Clayton, 2002) and it earned an important place in the Cambodian school system. In particular, it was used as a medium of instruction at different education levels and later was given second language status in primary schools (Ayres, 2003).

French continued to enjoy a presence in the Cambodian school system until the late 1960s when the country became affected by the Vietnam War (Clayton, 2002), which gradually led to civil war breaking out in the country in the 1970s (Chandler, 2008). Eventually, Cambodia entered into the brutal genocide period overseen by the Khmer Rouge regime (1975–1979). During this period, the speaking of all foreign languages was banned in the country as part of an effort by the government to build a utopian society that did not depend upon foreign political and economic intervention (Chandler, 2008; Clayton, 2002). The regime was later replaced by the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) in 1979, which was heavily influenced by Vietnamese political ideology (Chandler, 2008). During this regime, the language policy favoured

Vietnamese and Russian, and the use of Western languages was strictly controlled as a means of constraining international communication (Clayton, 2002).

With pressure from international communities, the Vietnamese eventually withdrew from Cambodia in 1989. The country now witnessed a number of significant changes in its political and economic structures (Chandler, 2008). In the early 1990s, this involved a move away from communism to democracy in order to adapt to global political changes (Chandler, 2008; Clayton, 2002). The shift led to the organisation of a national election in the country in 1993, which was overseen by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The mission of UNTAC in Cambodia brought more than 20,000 international peacekeepers to the country and they worked with some 60,000 Cambodians for two years (Clayton, 1998). For them, English was a major medium of communication. At the same time, a change was made in regulations with regard to the choice of foreign language that could be taught in the school curriculum, namely, from Vietnamese and Russian to English and French (Clayton, 2002).

The political shift that has taken place has also allowed Cambodia to participate in various regional and international organisations from which it had previously been excluded (Clayton, 1998). Immediately following the end of conflict, the country was admitted to become a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This took place on 30 April 1999. ASEAN is an organisation that is dedicated to political and economic and cultural interaction among the 10 nations in Southeast Asia and English is its official language. The presence of Cambodia in ASEAN put pressure on the government to consider introducing an English language programme for government organisations whose members had limited knowledge of English.

As Cambodia shifted to having an open economy in the early 1990s, the country increasingly engaged with global economies. The nation's foreign trade has increased significantly since then. English is seen as the main medium of communication for most international business meetings and transactions (Clayton, 2002). Concurrently, with the country being in transition from being a conflict to being a post-conflict country, assistance from donors and international communities began to flow into

the country following the end of conflict in 1998. This helps to explain the changes in foreign language policy in the school curriculum.

While attempting to negotiate to obtain resources for national development, Cambodian policy makers also have to attend to conditions imposed by donors regarding aid, one of which relates to the language policy for the education system. In particular, French is currently used as the medium of some instruction in all universities that receive aid directly from France. However, such a condition does not have any impact on the choice of foreign language at the secondary school level, where English is the most popular language studied.

Although English has become associated with both the business world and the education system in Cambodia since the 1990s, it is only recently that it has been introduced to the national curriculum at the primary school level. Indeed, the current primary school English curriculum, called Basic English Language (BEL), has only been implemented in primary schools nationwide for grade 4–6 from the beginning of the school year 2014/2015. Also, it has only been implemented in schools where teachers are confident in using English and where appropriate teaching and learning resources are available. These schools are mainly located in urban and large provincial centres of population.

Initially, the English language curriculum was developed and implemented with the support of the British organisation, Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO). In 2011, the MoEYS also started to design an English curriculum for the primary school level which was influenced by the VSO course. It was accepted by the MoEYS in 2012. Since then, it has been piloted in some primary schools in a few selected provinces, and student teachers from five teacher training colleges have been trained in how to use it (VSO, 2014). The new curriculum adopts a 'child friendly teaching approach' which encourages the development of an interactive and friendly learning environment. Because of successful results with the pilot programme, the MoEYS decided to implement the curriculum nationwide in 2014.

School principals in the study being reported here are aware of the background to the introduction of the English language into the primary school curriculum. They have mixed views on this. They welcome the integration of English into the primary school curriculum because they

believe that it will give students a chance to formally learn a new foreign language. This development, they hold, will help to prepare students for ASEAN integration, seeing this also as perhaps one reason why the MoEYS has been encouraged to integrate English into the national curriculum at the primary school level.

At the same time, school principals interviewed identified a number of issues regarding the implementation of the English curriculum in their schools. The first issue relates to the lack of teachers with English language competency at the primary school level. School principals in the study indicated that there are few teachers qualified sufficiently to teach the new English curriculum. Most senior primary school teachers, they say, have no, or very limited, knowledge of English, while the junior ones only have some knowledge of English. One participant explained the situation as follows:

> The Ministry has already published and distributed English textbooks to schools to be implemented. We have received the books which are meant for grade 4, grade 5 and grade 6. The problem is that we do not have teachers who can teach English in this school. Some teachers here have very limited knowledge of English while others including me have never learned English at all. We don't know how to deal with this problem.

They also hold that just because teachers know English, it does not mean that they are necessarily able to teach English. In other words, they recognise that to teach English properly, one has to have relevant pedagogical training.

The MoEYS has already started to provide both pre- and on-going preparation to equip teachers to deliver the new English curriculum. The on-going teacher professional development usually is offered only over a short period. As such, the teachers find it difficult to master the content and methods offered. Also, the number of teachers who attend the professional development sessions is small compared to the total number of those in the primary school teaching force.

There is little that school principals can do to deal with the problem of the shortage of teachers of English since the authority for recruiting and preparing teachers mainly lies with the higher offices of education. The issue is thus left unresolved in many schools. However, there is an indica-

tion from the study that some principals occasionally manage to employ a teacher of English from a nearby school to fill a position. The teacher can be from either a public or a private school. It seems that such a strategy is largely adopted only in urban and provincial town schools as it is usually in those areas that there is the possibility of finding teachers of English. Another strategy employed to deal with the shortage relates to utilising the available resources in a school. This means that school principals timetable a teacher in their schools to teach the language to different class groups when he or she is able to teach English.

A second issue confronted by school principals regarding the implementation of the English curriculum in Cambodian primary school relates to the shortage of teaching and learning resources. New English language textbooks have been published and distributed to certain schools. Some school principals in the study acknowledged receipt of the textbooks, but stated that the number they received was negligible. Other school principals had not received any textbooks. In addition, school principals reported a lack of other related teaching and learning materials to facilitate appropriate teaching and learning of English. The extra basic teaching and learning resources they consider to be important, but which they do not have, include posters, pictures and videos.

## Peacebuilding and Conflict Prevention Education

Together, peacebuilding and conflict prevention have become a significant part of the international development agenda. This is apparent on perusing various internationally-available documents. For example, back in the 1940s the Charter of the United Nations published in 1945 emphasised the importance of saving the next generation from conflict. Also, the Constitution of UNESCO adopted in the same year recognises the importance of creating peace in the minds of men [sic]. Hence, education is seen as a means through which peacebuilding and conflict prevention can be realised.

Peace education is broadly defined as being

> The process of promoting the knowledge, skills and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to

> prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. (Fountain, 1999, p. 1)

Bush and Saltarelli (2000) and Davies (2005) suggest that peace education initiatives should focus on social justice, equality and inclusive citizenship. These areas, they argue, can contribute to preventing violence and rebuilding conflict-affected and post-conflict societies. Nevertheless, many education policy makers in conflict-affected and post-conflict societies often fail to consider this when engaging in education reconstruction (Kotite, 2012).

In post-conflict Cambodia, the concepts of education for peacebuilding and conflict prevention are reflected in the national curriculum policy. In particular, the National Curriculum Policy 2005–2009 (MoEYS, 2004) for basic education places importance on having knowledge of national identity, an understanding of morality and civic responsibility, and knowledge in the domain of life skills that enable leaners to participate in society. However, these concepts are not translated into indicators of the learning activities that should take place in the schools. Also, school-level stakeholders, according to the participants in the study being reported here, are not well informed about the importance of such education. For example, school principals interviewed reported that there is minimal learning content prescribed that is associated with peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the primary school curriculum. While recognising the importance of the area, many seem to lack the knowledge and understanding required for engaging in such education.

Nevertheless, there is an indication from the study being reported here that education for peacebuilding and conflict prevention is, in certain instances, promoted through two main approaches. These are history education and the conducting of public forums.

## History Education

Recent years have witnessed increased attention being devoted to the teaching of history in schools in societies recovering from violent conflict.

Nevertheless, research has suggested that the teaching of history in post-conflict contexts, in particular during the immediate recovery period, is a controversial issue because there is often a lack of consensus on what to teach and on how to teach (Cole & Barsalou, 2006). Attention in discussions is generally placed on the contribution that history education can make to national reconstruction. Such discussion has focused particularly on whether or not the teaching of history can help post-conflict societies become more democratic, and whether it can promote peace and social cohesion among the population affected by memories of victimisation, death and destruction (Cole & Barsalou, 2006; Popovska, 2012). The discussion also centres on whether or not the teaching of history can help reinforce other transitional justice processes and promote a sense of the rule of law (Popovska, 2012).

Governments in post-conflict Cambodia have done little to educate the younger generations about the past, including about the genocide and wars that occurred in the country. The teaching of such history is not widely addressed in the school system. For instance, it is not taught at the primary school level because it is believed that it could be too sensitive for children at this stage of schooling and could have a negative impact on their thinking. However, there is an indication from the study that as part of the social science subject offered in grades 5 and 6, students are reading texts aimed at promoting the concept of peace amongst them.

It is also important to note that the MoEYS, with assistance from the Documentation Centre of Cambodia (DC-CAM), has recently introduced the teaching of genocide at the secondary school level, where history is taught as a stand-alone subject. The learning textbook, *A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975–1979)* (Dy, 2007), aims to educate Cambodians, especially those in the younger generations, about the genocide in the hope that it can contribute to addressing reconciliation, justice and democracy in the nation (Dy, Chea, Dearing, & Keo, 2009). Teachers are encouraged to adopt a teaching approach that promotes critical thinking about history, hoping that, through it, the students will acquire multiple perspectives on the history of the country. As Cambodia is in a period of transition, this education can also be of help for those of the younger generation to assist them to attain a good understanding and knowledge of what their future and the future of the country may be (Dy et al., 2009).

Participants in the study being reported here also recognised that while history education is not part of the primary school curriculum, knowledge about the past associated with wars and genocide is often passed on to the next generations through oral history and dialogue. This takes place, they hold, both in school and outside of it. In schools, this kind of knowledge, it is suggested, is frequently shared with students by a teacher or a school principal who has lived through the period. Furthermore, it is argued, it is passed on to the younger generation through intergenerational dialogue taking place outside of school. Often, parents and those of the older generations speak to the children and those of the younger generations about their past and especially about their hard life during the Khmer Rouge regime. This, participants commented, can provide additional knowledge for students to what they learn at school and help build a close relationship between older and younger generations.

There was agreement among school principals in the study that the teaching of history, and especially history in relation to war and genocide, should be introduced to students at the primary school level. They contend that students in grades 5 and 6 should have some knowledge about the past, and in particular about what actually happened during the Khmer Rouge regime. They stated that this knowledge could have a positive influence on how future citizens will behave in society. One school principal elaborated as follows:

> I think the teaching of history, especially history relating to the Khmer Rouge should be introduced into the primary school curriculum, in particular at grade 5 and 6. Students at this level should know what actually occurred in the past, especially what their parents and previous generations have been through, and this can have an impact on their thinking and behaviour. In particular, having such knowledge can be a good contribution to helping them to engage with society and make better decisions in life.

At the same time, there is concern about what should be taught and what should not be taught. In particular, there is agreement that the content of the teaching should not focus on such sensitive issues as slaughter, severe physical abuse and politics because these could have an insidious effect on the thinking and the emotions of children.

The latter point concurs with the recommendation of the United Nations General Assembly's 68th session, which states that the teaching of history in post-conflict societies should aim to promote critical thinking and an interactive learning approach which enables learners to acquire different perspectives about their society. This approach, it is contended, should aim to support democracy and mutual respect for others, and should include the histories of the formerly marginalised (Cole & Barsalou, 2006). It should not, however, it is argued, concentrate on promoting a political agenda or orientating learners toward any religious or official ideology.

## Public Fora

Another approach used to promote peace and prevent conflict in Cambodia relates to the organisation of public village fora. These fora, which are part of the 'Witnessing Justice Project' operated by DC-CAM, are intended to keep the general public engaged with, and informed about, the legal accountability process that is ongoing at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) by giving them a chance to attend a hearing at the Court (Ly, 2014). The ECCC, commonly known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, or the Cambodian Tribunal, is a special Cambodian court which functions to prosecute the senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge regime who violated international laws and committed brutal crimes during the genocide period. This court is operated according to international standards, with assistance from the international community and is channelled through the United Nations.

The public fora are particularly focused on rural villagers, women and marginalised groups, who are required to attend pre-hearing legal training and participate in discussion on issues of current concern at the ECCC before they are invited to attend a hearing at the Court (Ly, 2014). They are also invited to visit two historical sites to help them connect their own experience to the legal and historical narratives of the Khmer Rouge experience in Cambodia. The expectation is that these participants will then become resource people for the public village fora in their respective home communities.

The community fora are frequently held at a public place in the community and are attended by community members from all walks of life. The members can be monks, chiefs of the community, elders, principals, teachers,

students and other community members. A forum encourages discussion on justice and related issues, and the exchange of views. In particular, it promotes intergenerational dialogue between older and younger generations. It is through such dialogue that knowledge and understanding of the history of wars and genocide is constructed among younger generations. This, it is hoped, can contribute to building peace and preventing conflict in the future.

## Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with two sets of issues arising from Cambodia's status as a post-conflict country and how this reality compounds the situation for principals at the primary school level. These are issues pertinent to administration and to teaching and learning. While the administrative issues relate to political influence on education, psychological trauma and landmines, the teaching and learning issues are associated with the shortage of teachers, the choice of foreign language to teach and peacebuilding and conflict prevention education.

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# 7

# Conclusion

## Introduction

Cambodia has experienced a number of major political changes since the colonial period. Accompanying these have been reforms in policies and practices in education. In particular, there have been many changes in the areas of educational administration, curriculum, and teaching and learning at the primary school level in the country.

Since 1998, following the end of the brutal genocide and armed conflict that raged from the 1960s to the 1990s the government of Cambodia, with support from donors and international communities, has introduced many education initiatives aimed at rehabilitating and reconstructing the primary education system. These are in line with associated education policies and prescribed strategies. The policies and strategies have focused mainly on promoting access to education, enhancing the quality of education, and promoting institutional development and capacity building for decentralisation.

At the same time, very little research has been conducted on school leadership and management at the primary school level in Cambodia, and specifically in relation to the post-conflict period. In particular,


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hardly any research has been undertaken to examine the issues that primary school leaders confront and the strategies that they use to deal with them. This is in line with international trends; while extensive research projects have been conducted on educational leadership over the last three decades, much of the work has focused largely on relatively stable countries economically and politically (Bush, 2014; Nawab, 2011; Oplatka, 2004). By contrast, there are relatively few studies that have focused on extraordinarily challenging circumstances (Bush, 2008; Harris, 2002) and, in particular, at the individual school level in post-conflict settings (Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2013). As a result, there is a very poor knowledge base to draw upon to promote the generation of an understanding of the context and the nature of school leadership in post-conflict contexts.

The study featured was undertaken to address the deficits mentioned above. This final chapter now opens with an overview of the study reported in this book. It goes on to present a summary of the results relating to each of the three central research questions. The matter of the transferability of the study's results to contexts other than Cambodia is then considered. Finally, attention is given to the implications of the study for policy development and practice, and for future research.

## Overview of the Study Reported in This Book

The study reported in this book aimed to generate understandings on leadership at the primary school level in post-conflict Cambodia. It had three main aims. The first aim was to generate an understanding of the historical background to primary school leadership in Cambodia from colonial times until 1998. The second aim was to generate an understanding of the developments that have recently taken place in relation to primary school leadership during the post-conflict period. The third aim was to generate an understanding of the issues that are of current concern to primary school leaders and of the strategies adopted by them to deal with those issues.

Chapter 5 addressed the first and second aim of the study, namely, to generate an understanding of the historical background to primary school leadership in Cambodia from colonial times until the end of the conflict in 1998, and to generate an understanding of the developments that have recently taken place in relation to primary school leadership in the post-conflict period. Chapter 6 provided an understanding of the challenges that are of current concern to primary school leaders attributable to Cambodia being a developing country, and the strategies they adopt to deal with those challenges. Chapter 7 provided an understanding of challenges that are of current concern to primary school leaders attributable to Cambodia being a post-conflict country and the strategies they adopt to deal with those challenges.

## The First Research Aim

The first research aim, to generate an understanding of the historical background to primary school leadership in Cambodia from colonial times until the end of the conflict in 1998, was addressed in Chap. 5. The rationale behind the pursuit of this aim was premised on the assumption that the past regularly has an impact on the present in various ways, including by means of influencing people's actions. As such, it was recognised that it is not possible to broadly comprehend current school leadership in Cambodia without a clear knowledge of how it has evolved over time. Therefore, developments related to primary school education in general, and primary school leadership in particular, were examined with reference to seven political regimes. They are the pre-colonial period (prior to 1863), the French protectorate and colonial period (1863–1953), the Sihanouk regime period (1953–1970), the Khmer Republic or Lon Nol regime period (1970–1975), the Khmer Rouge Regime (1975–1979), the Vietnamese Occupation period (1979–1989), and the UNTAC and coalition government period (1989–1998). Education development during these periods moved through a number of stages, namely, those of traditional education, the promoting of formal education, the destruction of the formal and compulsory education system, and the restoring and reconstructing of the formal education system.

## The Promoting of Formal and Compulsory Education

While the French began to introduce a formal education system in Cambodia in the 19th century, it was limited to a small section of the population, primarily the children of the colonisers and those of local elites. The purpose of this education was to produce a workforce to promote the French colonial administration in the country. It was not until the early 20th century that the French started to introduce several administrative changes to facilitate mass participation in formal education and to promote the quality of primary school education. These reforms led to the introduction of the 'khum' school model, French-style teacher education, the issuing of royal instructions and the Cambodian Civil Code, and the modernising of wat school education.

Efforts to promote formal and compulsory education in Cambodia continued to be carried out by the Sihanouk regime of the immediate post-colonial period. This regime viewed education as a means to develop individuals who could make a social and economic contribution to the development of the modern state. Significant efforts were made to expand access to education to reach a wide population. For this purpose, an increased annual national budget was allocated to the education sector. Also, there was an increase in the nation's education facilities and infrastructure, a significant growth in the enrolment rates, and changes in the primary school curriculum. The latter included changing the medium of instruction from French to Khmer, restructuring the number of teaching hours per week, and producing teaching and learning materials written in Khmer. The efforts to expand and reform formal education during the two political periods under consideration, however, were hampered by a lack of economic resources, inadequate educational infrastructure and facilities, shortage of trained teachers, and a perception amongst many that the school curriculum was irrelevant.

## The Destruction of the Formal Education System

The landscape of education in Cambodia shifted to one of destruction when the country suffered seriously from the political, social and

economic dislocation of war. This began during the Khmer Republic Regime in 1970, which introduced new education policies with a focus on three key elements, namely promoting a connection between civic education and the economic and political ideologies of the regime, the change of the language of instruction in schools from French to Khmer, and the promotion of participation by students in political projects. The implementation of these policies was, in turn, constrained by the widespread use of armed conflict throughout the country, leading to the emergence of refugees, disruption to learning, and destruction of the education infrastructure. The situation became worse when the Khmer Rouge Regime came to power in 1975. This regime, which aimed to build an egalitarian and agrarian society, led the country into a brutal genocide which resulted in a substantial loss of human capital and the destruction of socio-cultural and economic structures, and infrastructure. Only formal education at the most minimal level, focusing on raising political awareness and resolving production issues at Party meetings, was promoted.

## The Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of the Formal Education System

After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge Regime in 1979, the education system was rehabilitated and reconstructed, especially between 1979 and 1998. This endeavour began under the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), which primarily focused on rehabilitating the basic education infrastructure and associated human resources to bring back 'normality' in the public education services. Special attention was given to establishing administrative bodies, reopening schools, repairing and establishing schools, and recruiting and training teachers. These goals were accelerated by the coalition government that existed between 1989 and 1998. Education reform initiatives were introduced to facilitate the reconstruction process that included formulating legislative and policy documents to guide education reconstruction, introducing a 12-year education system, restructuring the primary school curriculum, and expanding access to education.

The rehabilitation and reconstruction of education was carried out with significant support from NGOs, international multilateral donors and such international organisations as the International Red Cross, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, and the World Bank. Numerous challenges had to be addressed. These related to the lack of human resources, destruction of physical infrastructure, dealing with psychological trauma, the influence of the Vietnamese government on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of education, inadequate economic resources, shortage of teaching and learning materials, high student dropout, low student attendance, poor quality education and lack of involvement by stakeholders in education.

## The Second Research Aim

The second research aim of the study which has been reported here, namely, to generate an understanding of the recent developments in relation to primary school leadership in Cambodia from 1998 until 2015, was also addressed in Chap. 5. The rationale behind the pursuit of this aim arose out of a recognition that it is important to gain an understanding of the Cambodian government's recent initiatives, and its efforts to develop education in the nation, in order to better understand current primary school leadership practice. In this regard, the recent developments that have taken place in relation to both primary school education in general and leadership at this level of schooling in the post-conflict period, were investigated.

The post-conflict period investigated has witnessed peace and political stability that have contributed to steady economic growth and social development. The landscape of primary school education development during this period not only reflects the social and political interests of the nation, but also aligns with an international development agenda by promoting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All, which seek to promote universal primary education. A number of associated education initiatives were introduced to facilitate the realisation of this agenda. These include the formulation and implementation of such laws and policy frameworks which guided the development

of primary school education as the *Cambodian National Plan for Education for All 2003–2015* (MoEYS, 2003), *Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2001–2005* (MoEYS, 2001), *2006–2010* (MoEYS, 2005a), *2009–2013* (MoEYS, 2010) and *2014–2018* (MoEYS, 2014a), *Education Sector Support Programme (ESSP) 2006–2010* (MoEYS, 2005b), *Education Law* (Kingdom of Cambodia, 2007), *Policy for Curriculum Development 2005–2009* (MoEYS, 2004), *Child Friendly School Policy* (MoEYS, 2007), and *Teacher Policy* (MoEYS, 2013). Changes were also introduced to the governance and administrative structures of the education system to respond to reforms in education development locally and internationally.

The various efforts undertaken have resulted in impressive progress in expanding the provision of primary school education to reach a wide population throughout the country. Enrolment rates at this level of schooling increased rapidly throughout Cambodia, with many provinces achieving over 90 percent of net enrolment in 2015 (MoEYS, 2014b, 2015; UNESCO, 2015). Impressive progress has also been achieved in narrowing gender disparity in primary school education and in reducing the dropout rate at this level of education (MoEYS, 2014b; UNESCO, 2015). In addition, the quality of primary school education has been enhanced through primary school teachers obtaining improved academic qualifications and through a reformed primary school curriculum. Nevertheless, multiple challenges remain that need to be tackled. These relate to such matters as out-of-school children, low student learning achievement, inadequate educational infrastructure and facilities, and large classes.

Significant efforts have also been made to promote development in primary school leadership. One such effort is premised on promoting a decentralised school administration in relation to school operational budgets, a school cluster approach, and school-based management. This has facilitated the transfer of some autonomy from the central office of education to lower-level offices of education for decision making on school operation matters. In particular, it has promoted accountability in the utilisation of financial resources and has enabled local education stakeholders to become involved in various areas of school management. Overall, the approach can be seen to be a reflection of the commitment

of the government, of donors, and of development partners, to promoting the key education policies of improving access to education, enhancing the quality of education, and strengthening the institutional and individual capacity of the education system at all levels.

Another effort aimed at promoting development in leadership at the primary school level in post-conflict Cambodia relates to improving professional development and support for school leaders. This has involved implementing various school leadership and management projects seeking to develop the capacity of school-level stakeholders, and especially school principals, to enhance education outcomes. These projects have included the introduction of a mandatory management training programme for school principals operating at different levels. Related projects have had a significant impact on educational leadership, with school leadership being part of the government's strategy to promote school effectiveness and improvement.

## The Third Research Aim

Chapters 6 and 7 presented results related to the third aim of the study, namely, to generate an understanding of the current issues primary school leaders in post-conflict Cambodia face and the strategies they adopt to deal with those issues. Chapter 6 considered these issues arising from Cambodia being a developing country. The issues identified were categorised in terms of three broad themes, namely issues relating to administration, to teaching and learning, and to curriculum. Chapter 7 then went on to consider two broad issues arising from Cambodia's status as a post-conflict country. These are issues relating to administration and to teaching and learning. Both chapters also outlined various strategies school leaders have adopted to deal with their issues.

Adapting the work of Winter (1982), the various issues identified by primary school leaders in relation to the third research aim, and considered in Chaps. 6 and 7 can now be classified according to three levels, with each level relating to the perceived degree of impact that the issues that fall within it have on the school leaders in their work. These three levels can be labelled 'inconveniences', 'impediments', and 'impending threats', and may be depicted as laid out below.

'Inconveniences' refer to issues that are perceived to be a nuisance, but do not seem to generate great concern. 'Impediments' are issues that, it is held, can be tolerated for a while, but need to be sorted out eventually. 'Impending threats' are issues that, it is held, if not addressed quickly, have the potential to seriously threaten the delivery of the education services. Each level will be now considered in turn.

## Inconveniences

The first level, inconveniences, refers to issues which the primary school leaders identified as being a nuisance, but which have little immediate impact on their work. These issues can be grouped into those relating to administration, teaching and learning, and curriculum.

Regarding inconveniences relating to administration, participants drew attention to lack of community involvement, natural disasters, landmines, and psychological trauma. Specifically regarding community involvement, while acknowledging that community members have become more involved in school management than previously, participants argued that this involvement remains somewhat limited. Community members, they argued, continue to rely upon school principals and teachers to decide on matters relating to school budgets, formulating school development plans, and teaching and learning. They also stated that natural disasters and landmines can constrain the ability of students to gain access to school and to remain in attendance. This situation, they argued, is compounded by the fact that many school principals suffered a great deal from psychological trauma resulting from the armed conflict and genocide in the country. The associated traumatic experience can continue to have an impact that limits the ability of school principals to perform their work effectively and to promote a democratic working environment.

School principals also highlighted a variety of inconveniences in relation to teaching and learning. These relate to peacebuilding and conflict prevention education, deciding on the foreign language to teach in primary school, and lack of parental involvement in education. Even though Cambodia is a post-conflict country, no major attempts have been taken to promote peacebuilding and conflict-prevention education

in the school curriculum through specifically dedicated programmes. Rather, education on this matter is often promoted through two more general approaches, namely through history education and the conducting of public forums. In this connection, school principals widely recognise that the teaching of history about war and genocide at the primary school level could have a positive impact on how future citizens will engage in society, but they also consider that much more could be done.

The change in the foreign language policy to the teaching of English as a school subject is also seen by school leaders as an inconvenience. School principals have welcomed the initiative, commenting that it can give students a chance to learn English formally and help to prepare the country for ASEAN integration. At the same time, they reported that two main concerns could act as inconveniences hampering effective implementation of the curriculum. These are the lack of teachers with English language competency and the shortage of relevant teaching and learning materials.

Another perceived inconvenience relating to teaching and learning is that of a lack of parental influence on the learning of their children. Participants recognised that some parents have changed the way they perceive education through participating in various school activities that have a positive influence on the learning of their children. In this connection, three major types of parental involvement in education were identified. These are parental resourcing, parental school-based involvement and parental home-based involvement. At the same time, however, participants expressed a concern that the involvement of parents in school remains rather limited. Many parents, it is argued, still pay little attention to the education of their children, make only a limited resource contribution to help their children to learn, and participate in very few school activities.

School principals also identified two inconveniences associated with the curriculum. The first perceived inconvenience relates to frequent curriculum change. Numerous changes have been introduced to the national curriculum policy since the beginning of education rehabilitation in the 1980s. The first national curriculum policy reform was introduced in 1996, with the establishment of associated curriculum committees to oversee the reform. The 1996 curriculum was revised in 2004, with

changes being made to some key features, including teaching and learning hours, and subjects of study. The curriculum change has created two particular concerns that could act as inconveniences for school-level leaders. These are the limited knowledge and understanding of the curriculum changes that exist amongst stakeholders and the shortage of resources available to support the implementation of the curriculum at the school level. Another perceived inconvenience relating to the curriculum is that of overload. On this, school principals revealed that there is an imbalance between the number of subjects prescribed in the school curriculum and the amount of time allocated. This inconvenience could be a factor that might undermine the effectiveness of curriculum implementation.

## Impediments

'Impediments' as has already been stated, denotes issues which have a perceived impact on the ability of primary school leaders to perform their work in the best possible, or most efficient, manner. These issues can be grouped into those relating to administration and those relating to teaching and learning.

School principals reported multiple impediments in relation to administration. The first is political influence. Politics clearly has an influence in Cambodia on primary school education, and especially on school leadership practices, in a number of ways, including through the use of networks in school leadership appointment and teacher-transfer processes, financial contributions by teachers and principals to the political party with which they are associated, and attendance at political party meetings. Such influence can have a negative impact on the performance of school principals. In particular, it can create discrimination among school-level stakeholders and limit their participation in school development.

Another perceived impediment in relation to administration is poor working conditions. Primary school principals suffer a great deal in this respect because of few appropriate offices being available. The situation is particularly true in relation to schools in rural and remote communities where circumstances are compounded by a shortage of classrooms. Some

participants have difficulty in getting access to their schools because of the poor road conditions and floods during the rainy season. There is also a perception amongst school principals that they are not appropriately remunerated for their work.

Regarding impediments relating to teaching and learning, school principals drew attention to the limited professional development and support available for teachers. Although more teachers are now pedagogically trained before they start their job, many still lack opportunities for engaging in ongoing professional development. Certainly, some professional support is available for teachers, but its focus tends to be on introducing them to broad education changes and with familiarising them with what these changes entail. No systematic professional support is available to promote the capacity of teachers.

## Impending Threats

'Impending threats' relate to issues which school principals considered may have a significant negative impact on their ability to carry out their work effectively in the future. They can be grouped into those relating to administration and those relating to teaching and learning.

School principals identified two impending threats in relation to administration. The first is the lack of professional preparation and development for school leaders. While significant efforts have been made to promote access to education, to enhance the quality of education, and to promote decentralisation, little attention has been given to promoting the effectiveness of school leadership and management. School principals are not required to attend any formal pre-service leadership and management training before they become school principals. Often, they are appointed on the basis of having a successful teaching record, years of experience, and the influence of social networks to which they belong, rather than on their leadership potential and qualifications. School principals also often lack opportunities for continuing professional development following their appointment. It is true that some support is available for the minority, but the focus is usually only on administrative matters to do with communicating with the central office of education

and with general change in education. This situation, it is held, potentially undermines effective school leadership and management.

Another perceived impending threat relates to financial constraints. Schools rely mainly on funding support from the government. The funding support is allocated to schools based on the number of students in the school and on its location. Before the funding is distributed to a school, school-level stakeholders are required to formulate a school financial plan along with a school development plan, and submit them to the district office of education for approval. However, participants stated that the process is often complicated, involving the making of corrections and adjustments to the budget before it is officially accepted. Also, the financial allocation, which is often insufficient, is pre-determined, leaving minimal flexibility for school-level stakeholders to utilise the budget for meeting their needs. This situation is compounded by the financial distribution often not taking place on time. These circumstances can have a negative impact on a school's operation as a substantial budget is often required early in the school year.

In regard to impending threats relating to teaching and learning, school principals drew attention to the shortage of teachers. This situation can be attributed to the legacies of armed conflict and genocide in the country. Continuous efforts have been made by successive governments to address the problem, but it remains unresolved in relation to many primary schools, especially in rural and remote areas where working conditions are not attractive. Multiple strategies have been adopted by school principals to improve the situation. These include redeployment of teaching and non-teaching staff, using double-shift teaching, recruiting teachers from other schools within the same school cluster, adopting multigrade teaching, and using contract teachers. However, the view is that teacher shortage could seriously disrupt education in the long term if not dealt with adequately.

The lack of school infrastructure and facilities is a further impending threat for primary school principals. While acknowledging that the number of schools established with adequate sanitation facilities and basic classroom equipment has increased significantly over the last decade, there are still schools without them. Some school principals reported a shortage of classrooms in which to accommodate students. This can pose

a real challenge for many primary schools in disadvantaged areas and for some schools in urban areas with a large population of students. Compounding the situation, schools are frequently without proper roofs, walls, and floors. School principals also stated that there is sometimes a deficit of necessary instructional and learning materials, including textbooks, teachers guidebooks, posters, maps, and technology-related tools in certain schools.

## The Matter of the Transferability of the Results of the Study for Contexts Other than Cambodia

The research was designed to focus on discovery, insight and understanding, especially from the perspective of school leaders. Therefore, the results of the study are limited in the extent to which they may be considered transferable (O'Donoghue, 2007; Shenton, 2004; Yin, 2011). What is being referred to here is the extent to which results of the study can be seen to apply to other contexts and situations (Bitsch, 2005; Jensen, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2009).

The matter of transferability needs to be highlighted, in particular, as it relates to the third research question. This question was addressed by interviewing participants who were primary school leaders working in fifteen schools located in five different geographical locations in Cambodia. Notwithstanding the small-scale nature of the study, the results could be of interest to other primary school leaders and providers of primary school education both nationally and internationally, even though some of them may not be operating under the same conditions as those in the schools investigated. This is to recognise that they could be transferable in the sense that readers can relate to them in order to understand their own and others' situations (Jensen, 2008; O'Donoghue, 2007). For this purpose, scholars recommend that researchers provide 'thick description' of the research context, participants, and research design to enable readers to decide on the degree of transferability of the results of the study to other situations (Geertz, 1973; Jensen, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Burns (1994, p. 327) refers to this as "reader or

user generalisability." Specifically, school leaders and other providers of primary school education in post-conflict and developing countries can use the insights generated by the study to promote reflection upon school leadership in their own situations. Also, the understandings arising from the study can provide a valuable framework for researchers wishing to engage in related studies in Cambodia, and in other post-conflict and developing societies.

## Implications of the Results of the Study

The results of the study have implications for further research in the substantive area of leadership at the primary school level in Cambodia. Those results related to research questions one and two provide a framework that can be used to contextualise and understand current issues facing primary school leaders in the country. Such understanding, it is held, is critical for addressing current school leadership challenges. Attention is now turned to examining the implications of the study for policy development practice, and for further research.

### Implications of the Study for Policy Development and Practice

The results of study can make a contribution to increasing the understandings of policy makers and practitioners in Cambodia about the current situation of primary school leadership in the country. In particular, they can provide a sound foundation which policy makers and practitioners can build upon to inform future decisions. Attention is now turned to a number of areas to which this observation can apply.

#### Implications for Policy Formulation and Implementation

Rosli and Rossi (2014) identified two approaches that are often used in policy formulation and implementation. The first approach is called a 'bottom-up approach', where attention is paid to the importance of

involving local education stakeholders in the process of policy formulation and implementation (Rosli & Rossi, 2014). The second approach is that of a 'top-down approach', in which it is assumed that policy makers have authority and autonomy in producing well prescribed policy objectives and a set of appropriate instruments for policy implementation nationally. This latter approach often pays little or no attention to the role of local education stakeholders in the process of policy formulation and implementation (Rosli & Rossi, 2014).

Education policy formulation and implementation practice in Cambodia reflects the second approach noted above, and tends to open a gap between policy formulation and implementation. In this connection, there is an indication from the study that recent education policies and strategies have been formulated with minimal or no involvement from school-level stakeholders, and especially from teachers and school principals. This observation concurs with the finding of Weinstein, Freedman, and Hughson (2007), who argued that education reconstruction plans in post-conflict countries often lack local sensitivity, and that the needs and voices of the most affected groups tend not to be heard. As a result, the content of policy plans may not adequately address the practical challenges faced by the groups in question. Rosli and Rossi (2014) have further commented that such an approach does not often lead to success owing to unrealistic expectations and resistance from education stakeholders involved in implementation.

Along with the inconveniences, impediments and impending threats discussed in the previous commentary, the study has also revealed that little support is available for school-level stakeholders to carry out the implementation of education policy plans. School principals reported that they receive minimal support when education reform takes place and that they are often not well informed about curriculum change. Thus, they hold, they may be unable to effectively translate proposed changes into practice. Also, there is often a dearth of resources available to facilitate the implementation of education policy at the school level. Such deficits can constrain the ability of school-level stakeholders to realise the objectives set in education policy plans. This calls for the introduction of an approach which would enable stakeholders at all education levels in Cambodia to take part in the process of education policy formulation and implementation.

## Implications for the Professional Development of School Leaders

The results of the study reveal that primary school principals in Cambodia have had only limited opportunities to engage in continuing professional development following their appointment. It is true that there are several professional support opportunities available to them. These are the mandatory management training organised by the MoEYS and *ad hoc* professional support programmes jointly organised by the MoEYS and NGOs/development partners, or solely organised by NGOs/development partners. These programmes, however, are often short-lived and focus on administrative matters and general education change, with little reference being made to the importance of leadership development. Also, they are often not made available to primary school principals in the countryside. It is, therefore, important to consider the need for the provision of further professional learning opportunities for primary school principals in supporting them to deal with perceived challenges in their roles and to promote school effectiveness and improvement.

The importance of professional development for school leaders of the type proposed is widely articulated by scholars. Bush (2008, p. 106), for example, stated that "appropriate training, recruitment and selection do not ensure that principals are equipped with the requisite skills, attitudes, knowledge, and motivation to lead their school effectively". Principals, he held, need further professional support if they are to succeed in leading their schools and promoting education outcomes so that their students can compete in an increasingly challenging global economy. Goldring, Preston, and Huff (2012) made a similar point, arguing that professional development for school leaders is of paramount importance if they are expected to lead teachers and students to accomplish high levels of performance and learning.

Nevertheless, while the importance of professional development for school leaders has been widely recognised, there is little agreement on what constitutes an effective professional development programme. Bush, Glover, and Harris (2007) suggested that a rigorous professional development programme for school leaders should include four dimensions, including the learning environment, learning styles, learning

approaches, and learning support. Drawing from a review of the literature, Goldring et al. (2012) identified five key elements of professional development for school leaders. First, professional development for school leaders should be based on job-embedded instruction that enables participants to apply what they learn. Secondly, it must accommodate the needs of individual school leaders and their career stages. Thirdly, it must be long-term and provide various learning opportunities for school leaders. This suggests that professional development should take place in both a formal and informal environment. Fourthly, effective professional development must adopt a coherent curriculum which addresses the conditions and activities school leaders face in their daily work. Fifthly, it should create opportunities for school leaders to develop networking and consultation. It would be desirable for attention to be given to these five key elements when designing professional development programmes for school principals in Cambodia, while being constantly on the alert for indications of how they may need to be adjusted or changed as a result of the various contextual influences that prevail.

## Implications for Professional Development and the Working Conditions for Teachers

While pre-service preparation for primary school teachers has been widely expanded in Cambodia over the last two decades, little attention has been devoted to promoting professional development opportunities for them. The results of the study reported in this book indicate that primary school teachers lack opportunities for continuing professional development following the commencement of their teaching. Certainly, some professional support is available for a number of primary school teachers, but it is usually focused on introducing them to broad education changes and orienting them to the demands of new curricula, with little emphasis being placed on building teaching capacity. Consequently, teachers can often lack up-to-date pedagogical content knowledge, lack the ability to teach multigrade classes and students with special needs, and lack the ability to translate policies into practices. These gaps call for an initiative which aims to promote systematic professional development for teachers

in assisting them to promote effectiveness in their teaching and in policy implementation.

The results of the study reported here also draw attention to the need to enhance the working conditions of teachers. While the Royal Government of Cambodia has made efforts to improve the living standards of public servants, teachers, it is held, still do not receive sufficient remuneration to cover their day-to-day expenses. To address this, some teachers take on extra teaching classes to generate additional income, while others make extra money through having a second job. This situation constrains the capacity of teachers and has a negative impact on the quality of instruction. Teachers could also benefit from having access to appropriate working offices, the provision of additional instructional resources, and from an improvement in the conditions of roads.

## Implications of the Study for Further Research

Over the last 15 years increased attention has been given to generating understanding of the relationships between education, conflict, and education reconstruction in conflict and post-conflict countries. However, very little attention has been devoted to examining the area of educational leadership for such contexts and especially leadership at the individual school level. This has resulted in very few empirical studies being undertaken that can be drawn upon in order to understand the context and nature of school leadership in conflict and post-conflict contexts at an international level.

The study reported in this book, it is hoped, serves to highlight the need for further research on leadership at the individual school level in conflict-affected societies. In conducting such work, it may be helpful to adopt the research design used for the study reported here. Other qualitative research designs (longitudinal and case study) which would help to examine the perspectives of school leaders on the problems they face and how they deal with those problems in conflict affected contexts could also be used.

Future researchers might also consider a more extensive adoption of comparative approaches to the study of educational leadership and

management. This would allow for robust comparisons of school leaders' perspectives on school leadership practices across post-conflict contexts to be made. Furthermore, embracing comparative approaches would enable researchers to develop a broad understanding of the contextual complexity of school leadership practices across cultural contexts. On this, Dimmock and Walker (2000a, 2000b, p. 159) have stated that the cross-cultural comparative approach "can embrace a wider rather than narrower perspective, incorporating school leadership, organisational structures, management, curriculum and teaching and learning, in order to present holistic and contextualised accounts".

There is a need to further undertake research on school leadership in Cambodia to include additional school-level stakeholders, and especially teachers and parents. The study reported here has highlighted a number of issues associated with teachers, including inadequate professional development, poor working conditions and insufficient understanding of curriculum change. Examining teachers' perspectives on challenges facing primary schools could provide new insights into primary school education and school leadership in post-conflict Cambodia. There is also an indication from the study that there is a lack of involvement by community members and parents in education. Their perspectives could provide a deeper understanding as to why this is the case.

## Conclusion

The study reported in this book has offered a number of insights into leadership at the primary school-level in post-conflict Cambodia. It has specifically provided insights into the historical background to primary school leadership, recent developments in relation to primary school leadership in the country, and the issues of current concern to primary school leaders. The study highlights that while there were some important developments in relation to primary school education in general in the country, no major developments in relation to primary school leadership took place prior to the post-conflict period. During this period, significant efforts have been made to advance primary school leadership through promoting decentralisation in school administration and improving school leadership development and

support. It also suggests that school-level stakeholders encounter three broad sets of issues, namely, those relating to administration, those relating to teaching and learning, and those relating to the curriculum. Some of these issues can be attributed to 'general' developing world circumstances, including poverty and low economic growth, while others can be attributed directly to the legacies of armed conflict and genocide.

The study is one contribution to filling the gap in the literature on educational leadership in war-affected societies. The literature has indicated that while there has been substantial research on educational leadership over the last three decades, hardly any of this has focused on generating an understanding of how school leaders in post-conflict contexts conceptualise their work. In particular, very few studies have been conducted to comprehend the problems school leaders face and the strategies they adopt to deal with those problems. This has resulted in a poor knowledge base when it comes to developing theoretical frameworks for informing school leadership development in such complex contexts. Also, the lack of such a knowledge base can hamper efforts to help school leaders to perform their work effectively.

The study can also be of value by contributing to understandings of educational leadership in developing-country contexts. It is argued that educational leadership and reforms in developing countries have primarily drawn upon models taken from the West. This has often led to an impression that Western models of educational leadership are universal. However, cultural context and politics can greatly affect school leadership policies and practices. Therefore, the study may contribute to deepening understandings of the important relationships between context and its influence on school leadership practices.

Finally, the study can offer insights that may guide future research on educational leadership and leadership policy and practice in post-conflict and developing-country contexts. In particular, it is hoped that it will enable policy makers and practitioners to become informed and knowledgeable about the current situation of primary school leadership both in Cambodia and in their own countries. In turn, it is hoped that initiatives may be forthcoming that are aimed at promoting school leadership preparation, development and support programmes in order to improve the quality of education for all.

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